

This book

This is one of a 3-book series covering various aspects of marriage according to the authentic *Sunnah*. Marriage plays a most central role in the human life, and has been largely discussed by the scholars of *Islaam* through the ages, resulting in numerous writings and treatises. Some of those writings, mostly by contemporary scholars, have been translated to English. However, we find them restricted in scope, addressing Muslims who live in predominantly *Islaamic* countries, or overlooking important real issues that have developed under the modern civilization. This leaves quite a large gap that needs to be filled for the benefit of the Muslims in English-speaking countries, and this is what we attempt to fulfill over the span of three books:

وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً

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هُنَّ لِيَاْسُكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِيَاْسُهُنَّ

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The Muslim Family -3

رفقاً بالقوارير

The Fragile Vessels

Rights and Obligations
Between the Spouses in *Islaam*

محمد الجبالي

Muhammad al-Jibaly

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«رفقا بالقوارير»

The Fragile Vessels

Rights & Obligations Between the Spouses in *Islām*

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PRELUDE

Opening Sermon

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ، نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ،
وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا.
مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ، وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ.

Al-ḥamdu lillāh. Indeed, all praise is due to Allāh. We praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allāh from our souls' evils and our wrong doings. He whom Allāh guides, no one can misguide; and he whom He misguides, no one can guide.

وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ.
وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ.

I bear witness that there is no (true) god except Allāh — alone without any partners. And I bear witness that Muḥammad (ﷺ) is His 'abd (servant) and messenger.¹

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ،

¹ The above two paragraphs, together with the following three portions of *Qur'ān*, are called *Khuṭbat ul-Ḥājah* (the Sermon of Need). Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) often started his speeches with this sermon, and he was keen to teach it to his companions. The *ḥadīths* in this regard are recorded by Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasā'ī, and others, and are narrated by Ibn Mas'ūd, Ibn 'Abbās, and others (رضي الله عنهم). A full discussion of the various reports of this sermon is provided by al-Albānī in his booklet, "*Khuṭbat ul-Ḥājah*", published by al-Maktab ul-Islāmī, Beirut.

وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ آل عمران ١٠٢

«O you who believe! Revere Allāh the right reverence, and do not die except as Muslims.» ¹

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ، وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا، وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً، وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا ﴿١﴾ النساء ١

«O people! Revere your Lord who has created you from a single soul, created from it its mate, and dispersed from both of them many men and women. Revere Allāh through whom you demand things from one another, and (cherish the ties of) the wombs. Indeed, Allāh is ever-watchful over you.» ²

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ﴿١﴾ يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ، وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ، وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٢﴾ الأحزاب ٧٠-٧١

«O you who believe! Revere Allāh and say just words. He will then rectify your deeds and forgive your sins. He who obeys Allāh and His Messenger has certainly achieved a great victory.» ³

أَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ، وَخَيْرُ الْهَدْيِ هَدْيُ مُحَمَّدٍ (ﷺ)، وَشَرُّ الْأُمُورِ مُحْدَثَاتُهَا، وَكُلُّ مُحْدَثَةٍ بِدْعَةٌ، وَكُلُّ بِدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ، وَكُلُّ ضَلَالَةٍ فِي النَّارِ.

¹ Āl 'Imrān 3:102

² An-Nisā' 4:1.

³ Al-Aḥzāb 33:70-71.

Verily, the best speech is Allāh's (ﷻ) speech; the best guidance is Muḥammad's (ﷺ) guidance; and the worst matters (in creed or worship) are those innovated (by the people), for every innovated matter is a *bid'ah* (prohibited innovation), and every *bid'ah* is an act of misguidance that (whoever initiated it) will reside in the Fire. ¹

Defining Our Mission

Our goal in our works is propagating the true *Da'wah* that derives from Allāh's (ﷻ) Book and His Messenger's (ﷺ) *Sunnah*. This is a duty that every Muslim should cherish. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ، وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ آل عمران ١٠٤

«Let there arise from you a group of people inviting to the good, enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong. Those will be the successful.» ²

This *Da'wah* has two fundamental aspects:

- (a) *Taṣfiyah*: Cleansing and purifying the *Islāmic* beliefs and practices.
- (b) *Tarbiyah*: Guiding and educating the people according to the purified teachings.

Allāh (ﷻ) indicates that this was the Prophet's (ﷺ) message:

«هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ، يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَاتِهِ

¹ Muslim and others have recorded from Jābir Bin 'Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) used to start his speeches with this paragraph.

² Āl 'Imrān 3:104.

وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي
ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٢﴾ الجمعة ٢

«It is He who has sent among the unlettered a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His *āyāt*, purifying them, and teaching them the Book and Wisdom — although they were before in clear deviation.» ¹

This is also an obligation on every Muslim according to his ability, as Allāh (ﷻ) commands:

﴿وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ، وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ﴾ المائدة ٢

«Help one another in righteousness and piety; and do not help one another in sinning and transgression.» ²

Our mission is then to propagate the *Islāmic* teachings in various areas as follows:

1. CORRECTING OUR BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

We should revere, study, comprehend, and implement the noble *Qur'ān* and the Prophet's authentic *Sunnah* in accordance with the understanding and practice of the righteous *salaf*: the *ṣaḥābah* and their true followers, who are described in the following:

﴿وَالسَّيِّفُونَ الْأَوْلُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ
بِإِحْسَنِ رِضَىٰ اللَّهِ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا، ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ﴾ التوبة ١٠٠

¹ *Al-Furqān* 62:2.

² *Al-Mā'idah* 5:2.

«The first to embrace *Islām* among the *Muhājirūn* and the *Anṣār*, and also those who followed them in the best way — Allāh is pleased with them and they with Him. He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow: They will abide therein forever. This is the supreme success.» ¹

Thus, the guidance of the *salaf* is the only true guidance. Furthermore, the beliefs of the *ṣaḥābah* are the only acceptable beliefs:

﴿فَإِنْ آمَنُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا ءَامَنُتُمْ بِهِ فَقَدْ أَهْتَدُوا﴾ البقرة ١٣٧

«So if they believe as you believe ², they are indeed truly guided.» ³

Allāh warns against following any guidance other than the Messenger's (ﷺ) and his companions (رضي الله عنهم):

﴿وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ،
وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ، نُؤَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ، وَنُصْلِهِ جَهَنَّمَ،
وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا﴾ النساء ١١٥

«Whoever opposes the Messenger, after guidance has become clear to him, and follows other than the way of the believers ⁴, We will give him what he has chosen and let him into Hell: What an evil destination!» ⁵

¹ *At-Tawbah* 9:100.

² The address here is to the *ṣaḥābah* (رضي الله عنهم).

³ *Al-Baqarah* 2:137.

⁴ The description "believers" here applies first and foremost to the *ṣaḥābah* (رضي الله عنهم).

⁵ *An-Nisā* 4:115.

2. INVITING TO THE TRUE *DĪN*

We should contribute to educating and guiding the Muslims to adopt the true *Dīn*, act according to its teachings, and adorn themselves with its virtues and ethics.

We should also contribute to inviting the non-Muslims to the unadulterated truth of *Islām*.

This is the only way for any person to attain Allāh's acceptance and achieve happiness and glory. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«وَالْعَصْرُ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَّصُوا بِالحَقِّ وَتَوَّصُوا بِالصَّبْرِ»¹ العصر ١-٣

«By time, the human being is surely in loss, except for those who believe, do righteous deeds, enjoin upon one another the keeping to truth, and enjoin upon one another patience (in adversity).»¹

3. WARNING AGAINST DEVIANT BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

We should caution the Muslims and exhort them against any beliefs or practices alien to the pure teachings of *Islām*, such as *shirk* and *bid'ahs*.

4. PURIFYING THE *SUNNAH*

We should contribute to cleansing the *Sunnah* of weak and fabricated narrations. Wrong beliefs and practices deriving from weak reports have marred the beauty of *Islām* and prevented the Muslims' advancement.

The duty of purifying the *Sunnah* is so vital that the Messenger (ﷺ) praised those who perform it by saying:

«يحمل هذا العلم من كل خلف عدوله، ينفون عنه

¹ Al-'Asr 103:1-3.

تحريف الغالين، وانتحال المبطلين، وتأويل الجاهلين.»

«This knowledge will be carried by the trustworthy ones of every generation — they will expel from it the alterations made by those going beyond bounds, the false claims of the liars, and the false interpretations of the ignorant.»¹

5. LIBERATING THE *ISLĀMIC* THOUGHT

Guided by the *Islāmic* principles, we should contribute to reviving the unobstructed *Islāmic* thought and opposing stubborn adherence to *mathhabs* and prejudiced loyalty to parties. Neglecting this in the past has caused rust to dwell on the hearts and minds of Muslims, diverting them from the pure original sources of *Islām*, and causing them to deviate from the honest *Islāmic* brotherhood called to by Allāh (ﷻ):

«وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا» آل عمران ١٠٣

«And hold fast, all together, by the rope of Allāh, and be not divided among yourselves.»²

And by His Messenger (ﷺ):

«وكونوا، عبادَ اللَّهِ، إخواناً»

«Be, worshippers of Allāh, brothers.»³

¹ Recorded by Ibn 'Adiyy, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Ibn 'Asākir, and others. It is reported from a number of *ṣaḥābah* including Abū Hurayrah, Ibn Mas'ūd, and Anas (رضي الله عنه). All of its reports have various levels of weakness, but they add up collectively to make this *ḥadīth hasan*, as is indicated by al-Albānī in *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīh* (no. 248), and as expressed by al-Ḥalabī in *al-Ḥiṭṭah* (p. 70).

² *Āl 'Imrān* 3:103.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

6. PRESENTING THE ISLĀMIC SOLUTION

We should contribute to providing realistic *Islāmic* solutions to contemporary problems, and strive toward resuming a true *Islāmic* way of life and establishing a true *Islāmic* society governed by Allāh's law. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿وَأَن آحْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ﴾ المائدة ٤٩

«Hence, judge between them in accordance with what Allāh has revealed, and do not follow their errant views.» ¹

We call upon all the Muslims to support us in carrying out this noble trust. This will surely elevate and honor them and spread the eternal message of *Islām* all over the earth, as is Allāh's true promise:

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ﴾ الصف ٩

«It is He who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth, in order to make it prevail over all (false) religion, however hateful this may be to the pagans.» ²

CONCLUSION

This work is, therefore, a humble response to our realization of a great responsibility: the responsibility to help bring forth before the English-speaking public writings that refine *Islām* and present it pure and simple, as close as possible to the way it was understood and practiced by its early righteous pioneers — the *salaf*.

¹ *Al-Mā'idah* 5:49.

² *As-Saff* 61:9.

Technicalities

TRANSLITERATION

We make a serious attempt to limit the use of transliterated Arabic terms to the following two situations:

- There is no English expression that can reflect the same meaning as the original term.
- The Arabic term is of such importance that it is essential to familiarize the readers with it.

At the end of this book, we have included a glossary defining common Arabic terms that fulfill the above criteria. In addition, we have included an index of the Arabic terms that are more pertinent to this current work, indicating the page on which they have been defined.

Except for proper nouns, transliterated Arabic terms are *italicized*. In general, the rules of English pronunciation can be applied. The following table includes additional symbols employed in this book to help pronounce the Arabic terms.

Symbol	Stands for	English Equivalent Sounds
ā, Ā	(ا) <i>Alif</i> (long vowel a)	Mostly: <u>Ma</u> n, <u>sa</u> d. At times: Fa <u>th</u> er, ha <u>rd</u> , go <u>d</u> .
ū, Ū	(و) <i>Wāw</i> (long vowel u)	Ro <u>ot</u> , so <u>up</u> , flu <u>t</u> e.
ī, Ī	(ي) <i>Yā</i> (long vowel i)	Se <u>ed</u> , lea <u>n</u> , pie <u>ce</u> , recei <u>v</u> e.
'	(ء) <i>Hamzah</i>	The first consonant vocal sound uttered when saying: <u>a</u> t, <u>i</u> t or <u>o</u> h.
Th, th	(ث) <i>Thā</i>	<u>Th</u> ree, mo <u>th</u> .

Symbol	Stands for	English Equivalent Sounds
H, h	(ح) <i>Hā'</i>	No equivalent. Produced in the lower throat, below "h". Resembles the sound produced after swallowing.
Kh, kh	(خ) <i>Khā'</i>	No equivalent. Produced in the back of the mouth and top of the throat.
Th, th	(ث) <i>Thāl</i>	There, mother.
S, s	(ص) <i>Ṣād</i>	A deeper "s" sound. Somewhat close to the "sc" in "muscle".
D, d	(ض) <i>Ḍād</i>	Sounds deeper than a "d". Produced by touching the tongue to the mouth's roof.
T, t	(ط) <i>Ṭah</i>	Similar but deeper than a "t".
Z, z	(ظ) <i>Ẓah</i>	A deeper <i>thāl</i> , produced by touching the tip of the tongue to the back of the front teeth.
'	(ع) <i>'Ayn</i>	Produced in the bottom of the throat, underneath "h".
Gh, gh	(غ) <i>Ghayn</i>	A gurgling sound produced in the back of the mouth, just above the <i>khā'</i> . Similar to the "R" in some french accents.
Q, q	(ق) <i>Qāf</i>	Somewhat similar to the "c" in "coffee".

TRANSLATING AND REFERENCING *QUR'ĀN* AND *HADĪTH*

The *Qur'ān* contains Allāh's exact words. These words cannot be exactly translated into other languages because of possible

misinterpretations and limited human understanding. It is best to translate the meanings as understood by the Muslim scholars. This is what is attempted here. When an *āyah* is cited, the Arabic text is quoted first, followed, between double angle quotation marks («»), by the English meaning in **boldface**. The meaning is extracted from books of *tafsīr* and from accessible translations.

The location of a *Qur'ānic* citation is specified in a footnote. It provides the name of the *sūrah* followed by its number and the number(s) of the *āyah*(s) cited.

Similarly, when we cite a *ḥadīth*, we provide the Arabic text for the Prophet's (ﷺ) words, and follow that by its meaning, in **boldface**, between single angle quotation marks (◊).

A footnote normally specifies the location of a cited *ḥadīth* in the *Ḥadīth* compilations. The footnote indicates as well its degree of authenticity and the names of scholars who made such judgement. A *ḥadīth* narrated by al-Bukhārī or Muslim is automatically considered authentic.

NOTABLE UTTERANCES

Out of love, appreciation, gratitude and other noble feelings, a Muslim is encouraged to utter certain phrases at the mention of Allāh, His messengers, the angels, the *ṣaḥābah*, or other righteous Muslims. We present these phrases in condensed Arabic calligraphy as follows:

Phrase	Mentioned with	Transliteration	Meaning
سُبْحَانَكَ يَا أَعْلَى الْعَرْشِ	Allāh's Name	<i>Subḥānahū wa ta'ālā.</i>	He is exalted above weakness and indignity.
يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّوْمُ	Allāh's Name	<i>'Azza wa-jall.</i>	May He be hallowed and glorified.

Phrase	Mentioned with	Transliteration	Meaning
ﷻ	Allāh's Name	<i>Jalla jalāluh.</i>	May His glory be hallowed.
ﷺ	Muḥammad and other prophets	<i>Ṣalla 'Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam</i> ¹ .	May Allāh's peace and praise be on him.
ﷺ	Prophets and angels	<i>'Alayh is-Salām.</i>	Peace be on him.
ﷻ	A male companion	<i>Raḍiya 'Llāhu 'anhu.</i>	May Allāh be pleased with him.
ﷻ	A female companion	<i>Raḍiya 'Llāhu 'anhā.</i>	May Allāh be pleased with her.
ﷻ	Two companion	<i>Raḍiya 'Llāhu 'anhumā.</i>	May Allāh be pleased with them.
ﷻ	More than two companions	<i>Raḍiya 'Llāhu 'anhum.</i>	May Allāh be pleased with them.
ﷻ	A past scholar or righteous Muslim.	<i>Raḥimahu 'Llāh.</i>	May Allāh have mercy on him.

When coming across any of these symbols, the reader is advised to utter the complete phrase in order to obtain the reward of saying the appropriate *thikr* or *du'ā*.

¹ Uttering this is sometimes described as, "saying *ṣalāh* upon the Messenger".

This Series

Marriage is a subject of everyday's and everyone's concern. It plays a most central role in the human life, and has been largely discussed by the scholars of *Islām* through the ages, resulting in numerous writings. Some of those writings, especially by contemporary scholars, have been translated into English.

In the West, we find large numbers of people entering into *Islām*. With them, they often bring many misconceptions that they had inherited from their previous backgrounds, or that have been passed over to them from half-educated Muslims. A great deal of those misconceptions relate to marriage, divorce, and other family-related issues.

We find that most of *Islāmic* books on marriage are restricted in their scope, having been written for a different culture and background. They give little regard to problems and situations that concern the Muslims in the West.

This leaves quite a large gap that needs to be filled for the benefit of the Muslims in English-speaking countries, and this is what we attempt to fulfill in this 3-book series covering various aspects of marriage according to the authentic *Sunnah*:

1.

﴿وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً﴾
"The Quest for Love & Mercy"
Fiqh of Marriage & Wedding in Islām

Covers the importance and advantages of marriage, selecting a spouse, the courting process, the marriage contract, the wedding, celebrating the wedding, the *walimah*, and forbidden marriages; provides a practical procedure for performing the marriage contract; and includes a sample marriage certificate.

2.

﴿هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ، وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَهُنَّ﴾

“Closer than a Garment”

Marital Intimacy According to the Pure *Sunnah*

Covers the proper etiquettes of marital intimacy, forbidden acts of intimacy, the perils of *zinā*, and birth control; answers many frequently-asked questions about various acts of intimacy.

3. «رفقاً بالقوارير» “The Fragile Vessels”

Rights and Obligations between the Spouses in *Islām*

Covers the obligations of the two spouses, the wife's rights, and the husband's rights; contains biographies of the Mothers of the Believers; paints very realistic pictures from the life of the Prophet (ﷺ) with his wives; and presents a complete discussion of the *ḥadīth* of Umm Zar'.

This series deals with marriage from a practical aspect, benefitting in that from the author's many years of experience in the field of marriage and counselling. Each of its books serves as a handbook for performing marriage, learning the correct procedures for celebration a wedding, the “do's” and “don't's” of sexual life in *Islām*, and so on. At the same time, it maintains the soundness and precision in providing authentic evidence, which is customary in our books.

This Book

This is the third book in the marriage series (but the first to be published). It mostly deals with the rights and obligations of the two spouses. However, as its title may suggest, it attempts to be supportive to the women's side. There is a number of reasons for this, among which:

1. In the absence of true *Islāmic* justice, the women have often been abused and mistreated by their husband — frequently in the name of *Islām*, and through the use of authentic texts from the *Sunnah*.

Thus, we try to remove the misconceptions from some of the texts that the men wrongly use to their personal advantage.

2. Most of the books that have been published in English about the woman's rights and obligations seem to emphasize the importance of the woman's full obedience and submission to her husband — thereby neglecting the often more important obligations of the husband in the family structure. Therefore, we try to present a more balanced view of the rights and obligations of each side.
3. The picture of the model Muslim woman that has so far been painted for the Muslim women in the West is too idealistic and, sometimes, frustrating. By citing numerous examples from the lives of the Mothers of the Believers, we hope that we are introducing more practical and realistic examples that relate more to a woman's nature.

We make no claim to completeness in this book. The subject of marriage is extremely wide and very hard to encompass. We tried including as many texts and explanation as was practically possible, but we are sure of having missed many important issues that we hope to be able to add in future editions — if Allāh so wills.

Acknowledgements

All praise and thanks are due to our Lord (ﷻ) who facilitated completing this work. May He further reward all the Muslims who helped and supported this effort in various ways.

In particular, may Allāh (ﷻ) reward my *shaykh* and teacher, Muḥammad Nāṣir ud-Dīn al-Albānī (رحمه الله) whose works have benefited us in ways beyond description. May He also reward Ālā' al-Jibālī and Sundus al-As'ad who reviewed and proof-read parts of the manuscript, and 'Abdullāh al-Jibālī who designed the cover.

We ask Allāh (ﷻ) to make this humble effort helpful and fruitful to the Muslims, forgive our shortcomings, purify our work from hypocrisy and conceit, and accept it from us.

Our Lord, forgive us and all of the believers, and bestow Your peace and praise upon our Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ).

Muhammad al-Jibālī
28 Ṣafar 1421 H
1 June 2000

CHAPTER 1

A FAIR PARTNERSHIP

Introduction

AN ESSENTIAL BOND

Marriage is a bond held together by mutual rights and responsibilities for each of the two spouses. It is a partnership between them, and they are both required to play an active role in that partnership.

The man is appointed as the leader of the household, and the woman as the supportive helper whose expertise in many areas cannot be handled by the man. Some of the women who have been corrupted by the Western ideologies want to be the leaders of the family. But only chaos would prevail in such a family where the correct and natural standards are reversed.

Both the husband and wife have certain rights and duties. A happy and successful marriage is assured if both of them fulfill their duties and preserve each others' rights. Violating those rights is a certain way to misery and failure.

SHARED OBLIGATIONS AND SIMILAR REWARDS

Some responsibilities and obligations equally apply to the man and woman. For instance, the obligation of believing in Allāh (ﷻ) and following His commands is identical for both of them. Similarly, they are both responsible and accountable for their actions. They are both equally required to learn the correct religion, worship Allāh, and call to His way. The moral standards are the same for both of them, as are many of the regulations for dealing with other human beings.

The man and woman get similar rewards for obedience to Allāh (ﷻ), and similar punishment for disobedience or sinning. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ، فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً، وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾ النحل ٩٧

«Whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, while he is a believer — We will surely grant him a good life, and will surely give them their reward according to the best of what they used to do.»¹

And Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ، أَنِّي لَا أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ عَمِلٍ مِّنْكُمْ مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ، بَعْضُكُمْ مِّنْ بَعْضٍ ﴿١٩٥﴾ آل عمران ١٩٥

«Their Lord responded to them (saying), “Verily, I will not let the deeds of any worker among you go to waste — whether male or female; you are of one another.”»²

BETWEEN EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

In comparing woman to man in *Islām*, we have to realize that *Islām* does not equate two persons who are inherently different. There are matters in which the man is given preference over the woman, and vice versa. Those preferences stem from the differences in their abilities of performing various tasks. Thus, it is not a matter of equality, but a matter of fairness. The happy people are those who understand and accept this instead of trying to challenge or reject it. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«وَلَا تَتَمَنَّوْا مَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهِ بَعْضُكُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ، لِلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَتَبْنَا، وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَتَبْنَا، وَسَأَلُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ،

¹ An-Nahl 16:97.

² Āl-‘Imrān 3:195.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا ﴿٣٢﴾ النساء ٣٢

«Do not wish for things in which Allāh has preferred some of you over others. Men get a share (or reward) in what they have earned, and women get a share in what they have earned. And ask Allāh of His favors. Indeed, Allāh is ever Knowledgeable about all things.»¹

NATURAL DIFFERENCES

We conclude from the above that the *Islām*ic legislations regarding human beings, numerous and varied though they are, are equally applicable to the man and woman. But that does not mean that the man and woman are identical in everything.

There are certain legislations that strictly apply to the woman because of her feminine nature, and others that strictly apply to the man because of his masculine nature. Such instructions are then meant for a specific gender of human beings, whether male or female, because of its natural difference from the other gender.

Some of the most important of those gender-based instructions were indicated in one of the Prophet's (ﷺ) last speeches. ‘Amr Bin al-Aḥwaṣ al-Jushamī (رضي الله عنه) reported that he heard Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) in the “Farewell Pilgrimage” (on ‘Arafah) praise and glorify Allāh, remind and reproach the people, and then say:

«ألا واستوصوا بالنساء خيراً، فإنهن عوان عندكم، ليس تملكون منهن شيئاً غير ذلك، إلا أن يأتين بفاحشة مبينة. فإن فعلن فأهجروهن في المضاجع، وأضربوهن ضرباً غير مبرح، فإن أطعنكم فلا تبغوا عليهن سبيلاً. ألا إن لكم على نساءكم حقاً، ولنساءكم عليكم حقاً. فأما حقكم على نساءكم، فلا يوطئن فرشكم من

¹ An-Nisā 4:32.

تكرهون، ولا يأذن في بيوتكم لمن تكرهون. ألا وحقهن عليكم أن

تحسنوا إليهن في كسوتهن وطعامهن.»

«Lo! Take good care of the women, for they surely are captives under you, and you do not possess of them any more than that — unless they commit a manifest sin; if they do that, abandon them in sleep, and beat them lightly; if they obey you then do not ill-treat them any further. Lo! you have rights on your women, and your women have rights on you. Your right on them is that they should not allow to sit on your furnishings anyone whom you dislike, nor allow into your houses anyone whom you dislike. Lo! And their right upon you is that you be good to them in terms of their clothing and food.»¹

This clearly indicates that there are specific rights for the women upon their husbands, and other rights specific for the men upon their wives. Keeping this in mind for the time being, we emphasize that the subject of this chapter is to discuss the main shared rights and obligations, leaving the gender-based rights and obligations to the following two chapters.

Responsibility and Accountability

Both man and woman have a great responsibility in establishing and nurturing the family unit. They are the masters of their house. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«كل نفس من بني آدم سيّد: فالرجل سيّد أهله، والمرأة سيّدة بيتها.»

«Every soul of Ādam's children is a master. The man is the master of his family, and the woman is the

¹ Recorded by at-Tirmithī, an-Nasā'ī, and Ibn Mājah. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 7880 & *Irwā' ul-Ghālil* no. 2030).

mistress of her house.»¹

Being masters and holders of responsibility, both of them are also answerable before Allāh (ﷻ) for their responsibility. Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«كلّكم راعٍ، وكلّكم مسؤولٌ عن رعيّته. فالإمامُ راعٍ، وهو مسؤولٌ عن رعيّته؛ والرجل راعٍ في أهله، وهو مسؤولٌ عن رعيّته؛ والمرأة راعيةٌ في بيت زوجها، وهي مسؤولّةٌ عن رعيّتها؛ والخدام راعٍ في مال سيّده، وهو مسؤولٌ عن رعيّته؛ والرجل راعٍ في مال أبيه، وهو مسؤولٌ عن رعيّته. فكلّكم راعٍ، وكلّكم مسؤولٌ عن رعيّته.»

«Each one of you is entrusted with a responsibility, and each one of you will be questioned about his responsibility. The ruler is responsible (for his people), and will be questioned about his responsibility. The man is responsible for his family, and will be questioned about his responsibility. The woman is responsible for her husband's house, and will be questioned about her responsibility. The servant is responsible for his master's property, and will be questioned about his responsibility. And a man is responsible for his father's wealth, and will be questioned about his responsibility. Thus, each one of you has a responsibility, and each one of you will be questioned about his responsibility.»²

It is extremely important for the man and woman to have a clear understanding of the great responsibility that rests on both of their shoulders. That would make them work hard and cooperate well in order to fulfill their mission and be ready with the answers when they

¹ Recorded by Ibn as-Sunnī and Abū Bakr al-Muqrī. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*as-Saḥīḥah* no. 2041 & *Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 4565).

² Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

are questioned about the way they handled their responsibilities.

Good Manners

EXCELLENCE OF GOOD MANNERS

Good manners are the distinctive characteristics of the religion of *Islām*. In a nutshell, they are the reason behind the Prophet's (ﷺ) mission. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ لِأَتَمِّمَ صَالِحَ (أَوْ مَكَارِمَ) الْأَخْلَاقِ.»

«I have only been sent (by Allāh) to complete the good manners.»¹

This was best demonstrated by our Prophet (ﷺ), whom Allāh (ﷻ) described as:

«وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ ۝ الْقَلَمُ ۝»

«Indeed, you are of a great moral character.»²

The best people after the Prophet (ﷺ) are those with best manners. 'Abdullāh Bin 'Amr (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إِنَّ مِنْ خِيَارِكُمْ أَحْسَنَكُمْ أَخْلَاقًا.»

«Indeed, among the best of you are those with the best manners.»³

And 'Abdullāh Bin 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

¹ Recorded by Ibn Sa'd, al-Hākim, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Sahīh al-Jāmi'* no. 2349 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 45).

² *Al-Qalam* 68:4.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

«أَفْضَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا.»

«The best among the believers are those with best manners.»¹

A Muslim should display good manners in all of his dealings. That would grant him a most distinguished position among the other Muslims. 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ لَيَدْرِكُ بِحَسَنِ خُلُقِهِ دَرَجَةَ الصَّائِمِ الْقَائِمِ.»

«Indeed, a believer attains (in *Jannah*), because of his good manners, the level of one who fasts and stands (for the night prayer).»²

Good manners makes a believer worthy of the love of the Messenger (ﷺ) and the closeness to him in *Jannah*. Jābir Bin 'Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إِنَّ مِنْ أَحَبِّكُمْ إِلَيَّ وَأَقْرَبَكُمْ مِنِّي مَجْلِسًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَحْسَنَكُمْ أَخْلَاقًا.»

«Indeed, among those of you whom I love best, and who are closest to me in their recline on the Day of Resurrection, are those with the best manners.»³

And Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«أَكْثَرُ مَا يُدْخِلُ النَّاسَ الْجَنَّةَ تَقْوَى اللَّهِ وَحَسَنُ الْخُلُقِ،

وَأَكْثَرُ مَا يُدْخِلُ النَّاسَ النَّارَ الْفُجُورُ وَالْفَرْجُ.»

«The things that mostly cause the people to enter

¹ Recorded by Ibn Mājah and al-Hākim. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi'* no. 1128 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1374).

² Recorded by Abū Dāwūd and Ibn Hibbān. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Sahīh al-Jāmi'* no. 1932).

³ Recorded by al-Tirmidhī. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Sahīh al-Jāmi'* no. 2201 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 791).

Jannah are: revering Allāh and good manners. And the things that mostly cause the people to enter the Fire are: the mouth and the private parts.»¹

Good manners should not be limited to dealing with distant people. Rather, they should best be implemented with the close relatives. More importantly, the two spouses should interact with each other in the highest form of good character. Within the family, one's true character is projected without disguise, because one is then free from most of the artificiality and showoff that is often exercised with other people.

Thus, exercising good manners is a shared right and duty between the two spouses; it is emphasized by their extreme closeness, and is necessary for the well being of their relationship. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«أَكْمَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِيمَانًا أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا، وَخِيَارُكُمْ خِيَارُكُمْ لِنِسَائِهِمْ.»

«The believers with the most complete *īmān* are those with most refined manners. And the best among you are those who are best to their women.»²

Therefore, in dealing with one's spouse, one should exhibit good manners in all respects. A detailed discussion of that would be exhaustive and beyond the scope of this book. Yet, in the following sub-sections we discuss some of the most important character traits that must be observed in dealings within the family unit.

TRUTHFULNESS

Allāh (ﷻ) praises the truthful in many places of His Book, and considers truthfulness a quality of the believers³. He also condemns

¹ Recorded by at-Tirmithī, Aḥmad, and Ibn Mājah. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*as-Sahīḥah* no. 977).

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³ See, for example, *at-Tawbah* 9:119.

the liars and considers lying a quality of the hypocrites¹.

Also, the Prophet (ﷺ) praised truthfulness and indicated that it leads to *Jannah*, and condemned lying and indicated that it leads to the Hellfire. 'Abdullāh Bin Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إِنَّ الصَّدْقَ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْبِرِّ، وَإِنَّ الْبِرَّ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ. وَإِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لِيَصْدُقَ وَيَتَحَرَّى الصَّدْقَ حَتَّى يُكْتَبَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ صَدِيقًا. وَإِنَّ الْكَذِبَ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْفُجُورِ، وَإِنَّ الْفُجُورَ يَهْدِي إِلَى النَّارِ. وَإِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَكْذِبُ وَيَتَحَرَّى الْكَذِبَ حَتَّى يُكْتَبَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَذَّابًا.»

«Indeed, truthfulness leads to righteousness, and righteousness leads to *Jannah*. Indeed, a man would continue to practice and pursue truthfulness until he is recorded with Allāh as a *ṣiddīq* (most truthful).

And indeed, lying leads to immorality, and immorality leads to the Fire. Indeed, a man would continue to practice and pursue lying until he is recorded with Allāh as a liar.»²

Truthfulness brings trust and confidence between the two spouses, which are necessary elements for the success of any partnership, marriage being no exception. Lying and deceit, on the other hand, constitute a precarious way that may lead to quick destruction.

Some people carry the misconception that it is permissible to lie to one's spouse without limits. This misconception derives from misunderstanding the following *ḥadīths*.

Umm Kulthūm Bint 'Uqbah (رضي الله عنها)³ reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«لَا أَعَدَّه كَاذِبًا: الرَّجُلُ يَصْلُحُ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ، يَقُولُ الْقَوْلَ

¹ See, for example, *al-Munāfiqūn* 63:1).

² Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

³ She is the wife of 'Abd ur-Raḥmān Bin 'Awf (رضي الله عنه).

***Jannah* are: revering Allāh and good manners. And the things that mostly cause the people to enter the Fire are: the mouth and the private parts.»¹**

Good manners should not be limited to dealing with distant people. Rather, they should best be implemented with the close relatives. More importantly, the two spouses should interact with each other in the highest form of good character. Within the family, one's true character is projected without disguise, because one is then free from most of the artificiality and showoff that is often exercised with other people.

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³ She is the wife of 'Abd ur-Raḥmān Bin 'Awf (رضي الله عنه).

لا يريد به إلا الإصلاح. والرجل يقول في الحرب.

والرجل يحدث امرأته، والمرأة تحدث زوجها.

«I do not consider him lying: a man who appeases among (dissenting) people and utters a (false) statement only for the sake of reconciliation; a man who says a (false) statement (to the enemy) during war; and a man who chats with his wife, or a woman who chats with her husband.»¹

Asmā' Bint Yazīd (رضي الله عنها) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«لا يصلح الكذب إلا في ثلاث: يحدث الرجل امرأته ليرضيها،

والكذب في الحرب، والكذب ليصلح بين الناس.»

«Lying is not appropriate except in three situations: when a man chats with his wife to please her, lying (to the enemy) in war, and lying to appease among (dissenting) people.»²

It is clear from the above two *ḥadīths* that lying between the two spouses is limited to pleasant chatting. That would be in situations such as a man telling his wife that she cooked the best food or has the best dress, or a woman telling her husband that the gift he gave her is most pleasing to her, or telling each other an entertaining imaginary story, and so on. And even in such cases, it is better for one to avoid lying and use instead statements that could carry two meanings, one of which is true.

HUMBLeness

Humbleness is a required character among the Muslims. Allāh

¹ Recorded by Abū Dāwūd. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 545 & *Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 7170).

² Recorded by at-Tirmithī and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 545 & *Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 7723).

commands even His Messenger (ﷺ) to show humbleness to the believers¹. Arrogance is a character that is only adequate for Allāh. 'Iyāḍ Bin Ḥimār (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إن الله أوحى إليّ أن: تواضعوا حتى لا يفخر أحدٌ على أحد،

ولا يبغي أحدٌ على أحد.»

«Indeed, Allāh has revealed to me that you must show humbleness, so that none among you would boast over anyone else, and none among you would transgress against anyone else.»²

This should be well understood by the spouses. They should show humbleness toward each other, and should avoid boasting about wealth, social status, intelligence, beauty, relatives, ancestors, or any other favor that Allāh may have granted them. Being boastful, especially during arguments, is a sign of ignorance and immaturity that they should both loathe to practice.

MERCY AND KINDNESS

The two spouses should show utmost compassion and mercy toward each other. They should be ever ready to overlook, forgive, and guide each other. As discussed early in this book, compassion is an important fruit of marriage, and should never be allowed to go to waste.

A merciful person is worthy of Allāh's mercy. 'Abdullāh Bin 'Amr (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«الراحمون يرحمهم الرحمن. أرحموا من في الأرض يرحمكم من في السماء.»

«The merciful ones are granted mercy by the Most Merciful (ﷻ). Show mercy to those who are on Earth, and the One above the heavens will show mercy to you.»³

¹ *Ash-Shu'arā'* 26:215.

² Recorded by Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, and others.

³ Recorded by Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-

Similarly, Allāh, the Most Kind, loves kindness and rewards generously for it. Whenever kindness is employed in a situation, it improves and helps it — contrary to harshness. ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said to her:

«يا عائشة، إن الله رفيق، يحب الرفق في الأمر كله، ويعطي على الرفق ما لا يعطي على العنف، وما لا يعطي على سواه. يا عائشة، عليك بتقوى الله والرفق، فإن الرفق لم يكن في شيء قط إلا زانه، ولا نزع من شيء إلا شانه.»

«O ‘Ā’ishah! Indeed, Allāh is Kind, and loves kindness in all affairs. He grants for kindness things that he would not grant for cruelty or any other thing. O ‘Ā’ishah! Employ *taqwā* of Allāh and kindness, for indeed, kindness was never in a thing but it adorned it, and never was it removed from a thing but it disgraced it.»¹

Indeed, a person without kindness and mercy brings harm on himself before anyone else. Such a person denies himself Allāh’s mercy and forgiveness.

Jarīr Bin ‘Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«من يُحرَم الرفق يُحرَم الخير كله.»

«He who is denied kindness has indeed been denied all forms of good.»²

Abū Hurayrah, Abū Sa’īd al-Khudrī, and Jarīr Bin ‘Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) all reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

Albānī (*Sahīh al-Jāmi’* no. 3522 & *as-Sahīhah* no. 925).

This is a combined narration recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Aḥmad, and others (*Sahīh al-Jāmi’* no. 7926, 7921, and 7927).

² Recorded by Muslim, Aḥmad, and others.

«من لا يرحم لا يُرحم.»

«He who does not show mercy, no mercy will be shown to him (by Allāh).»¹

It is the obligation of both spouses to nurture kindness and mercy in their family. This should be the first cure that they apply when problems and differences arise between them. Not only would that help resolve their problems, but would also grant them Allāh’s love and mercy, as in the above *ḥadīths*.

FORGIVENESS

A Muslim should not have the attitude of revenge and “getting even”. That would bring hatred among the Muslims and remove from among them feelings of love and security. A Muslim should always be ready to forgive, especially when dealing with his wife and close relatives. Showing forgiveness makes a person worthy of Allāh’s forgiveness. In one of the reports of the above *ḥadīth* by Jarīr Bin ‘Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه), Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«من لا يرحم لا يُرحم، ومن لا يَغْفِرْ لا يُغْفَرْ له.»

«He who does not show mercy, no mercy will be shown to him (by Allāh). And he who does not forgive will not be forgiven.»²

We have a great example in Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) who never took personal revenge for himself. ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported:

«ما رأيت رسول الله منتصراً من مظلمة ظلمها قط، ما لم يُنتَهَك من محارم الله شيء. فإذا أُنْتَهَك من محارم الله شيء»

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

² Recorded by Aḥmad and al-Tabarānī (in *al-Kabīr*). Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Sahīh al-Jāmi’* no. 6599 & 6600).

كان من أشدهم في ذلك غضباً. وما خَيْر بين أمرين إلا أختار
أيسرهما، ما لم يكن مأثماً.”¹

“I never saw Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) seeking revenge when he was wronged — except when one of Allāh’s prohibitions was overstepped. When any of Allāh’s prohibitions was overstepped, he would be most angry for that. Also, whenever he was given a choice between two matters, he would choose the easiest of the two — unless it would involve a sin.”¹

AVOIDING OPPRESSION

The two spouses should be fair and just in dealing with each other. They should avoid oppressing each other in any way. They should not take unfair advantage of their rights, or abuse each other through their distinctive qualities. Oppression has been prohibited by Allāh (ﷻ), even upon Himself! Abū Tharr (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«يا عبادي، إني حرمت الظلم على نفسي وجعلته بينكم محرماً،
فلا تظالموا.»

«Allāh (ﷻ) says, “O my servants! I have indeed prohibited injustice upon Myself and made it prohibited among you, so do not oppress one another.”»²

Oppression is a great sin that deserves Allāh’s wrath and brings about His punishment in both lives. Jābir Bin ‘Abdillāh and ‘Abdullāh Bin ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«اتَّقُوا الظُّلْمَ، فَإِنَّ الظُّلْمَ ظُلُمَاتٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.»

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

² Recorded by Muslim.

«Avoid oppression, because oppression will result in deep darkness on the Day of Resurrection.»¹

In another report, Jābir Bin ‘Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) said that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«اتَّقُوا الظُّلْمَ، فَإِنَّ الظُّلْمَ ظُلُمَاتٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ،
وَاتَّقُوا الشُّحَّ، فَإِنَّ الشُّحَّ أَهْلَكَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ.»

«Avoid oppression, because oppression will result in deep darkness on the Day of Resurrection; and avoid stinginess, because stinginess had destroyed those who preceded you.»²

Let not feelings of superiority and dominance creep into the heart of either of the two spouses, causing him (or her) to oppress the other spouse, thinking that he (or she) has accomplished thereby a well earned and unchallenged victory, once and for all. Let them both ponder over the above *ḥadīths*, and let them beware of a secret curse that may arise from the heavy heart of an oppressed person. Anas Bin Mālīk (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«اتَّقُوا دَعْوَةَ الْمَظْلُومِ، وَإِنْ كَانَ كَافِرًا، فَإِنَّهُ لَيْسَ دُونَهَا حِجَابٌ.»

«Avoid the oppressed’s supplication (against you), even if he was a *kāfir*, because there is no barrier in its way (to Allāh).»³

And oppression is never forgotten, and will never go unpunished. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«مَنْ كَانَتْ لِأَخِيهِ عِنْدَهُ مَظْلَمَةٌ مِنْ عَرَضٍ أَوْ مَالٍ، فَلْيَتَحَلَّلْهُ الْيَوْمَ.»

¹ Recorded by Muslim and others.

² Recorded by Muslim, Ahmad, and others.

³ Recorded by Ahmad, Abū Ya’lā, and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 767 & *Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi’* no. 119).

قَبْلَ أَنْ يُؤْخَذَ مِنْهُ يَوْمَ لَا دِينَارَ وَلَا دِرْهَمَ: فَإِنْ كَانَ لَهُ عَمَلٌ صَالِحٌ،
أُخِذَ مِنْهُ بِقَدَرِ مَظْلَمَتِهِ؛ وَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ عَمَلٌ، أُخِذَ مِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ
صَاحِبِهِ فَجُعِلَتْ عَلَيْهِ.»

«Whoever has oppressed his brother in regard to his honor or property should beg for his forgiveness today — before it will be taken from him on a Day when there will be no *dīnārs* or *dirhams*: If he has good deeds, some of them will be taken in the amount of his oppression; and if he has no good deeds, some of his (oppressed) companion's sins will be taken and loaded upon him.»¹

AVOIDING FOUL LANGUAGE

The married life should remain clean and refined from the filth and obscenity of the street. It should be exemplary, first between the two spouses, and then in front of their children, in uttering words pleasing to Allāh, His Messenger (ﷺ), and the believers. 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) advised her:

«يَا عَائِشَةُ، لَا تَكُونِي فَاحِشَةً. إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفَاحِشَ الْمُتَفَحِّشَ.»

«O 'Ā'ishah! Do not be obscene. Indeed, Allāh does not love a vile person who relishes obscenity.»²

And this is exactly how Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) was as described by 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها):

«لَمْ يَكُنْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ فَاحِشًا وَلَا مُتَفَحِّشًا، وَلَا صَخَابًا فِي

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī and Ahmad.

² This is a combined narration recorded by Muslim, al-Bukhārī (in *al-Adab ul-Mufrad*), and Abū Dāwūd (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 7933 & 7922, and *Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 2133).

الْأَسْوَاقِ، وَلَا يَجْزِيُ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ، وَلَكِنْ يَغْفِرُ وَيَصْفَحُ.»

“Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) was not obscene, nor did he relish obscenity, nor was he loud in the markets. He did not punish for any (personal) harm, but forgave and pardoned.”¹

AVOIDING ARGUING AND QUARRELING

Frequent arguing and quarrelling is a sure way to undermining the ties between the married couple, and should therefore be seriously avoided. Each spouse should bear in mind that it is not always vital to prove his (or her) point and be the victor in every argument. They should remember to give up for the sake of the well-being of their marriage. Allāh promises a house in *Jannah* for one who drops arguing, even though he is right. Abū Umāmah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«أَنَا زَعِيمٌ بَيْتٍ فِي رَبِضِ الْجَنَّةِ لِمَنْ تَرَكَ الْمِرَاءَ وَإِنْ كَانَ مُحِقًّا،
وَبَيْتٍ فِي وَسْطِ الْجَنَّةِ لِمَنْ تَرَكَ الْكَذْبَ وَإِنْ كَانَ مَازِحًا، وَبَيْتٍ
فِي أَعْلَى الْجَنَّةِ لِمَنْ حَسُنَ خُلُقُهُ.»

«I am a guarantor of a house on the outskirts of *Jannah* for one who abandons arguing, even if he is right; and a house in the center of *Jannah* for one who abandons lying, even if he is joking; and a house in the highest place of *Jannah* for one who has good manners.»²

On the other hand, Allāh hates a stubbornly quarrelsome person. 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

¹ Recorded by at-Tirmithī, Ahmad, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Mukhtasar ash-Shamā'il* p. 182).

² Recorded by Abū Dāwūd and ad-Ḍiyā' ul-Maqdisī. Verified to be *hasan* by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 1464 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 273).

«أَبْغَضُ الرِّجَالِ إِلَى اللَّهِ الْأَلَدُّ الْخَصِمُ.»

«The most hated man to Allāh is the stubbornly quarrelsome.»¹

AMICABLY RESOLVING THE PROBLEMS

There is always some chance for misunderstanding or disagreement between the two spouses. Some of those differences may cause one or both of them to turn away from the other and seek radical solutions that may terminate the marriage. But it is recommended for them to first seek reconciliation, and Allāh (ﷻ) considers reconciliation the best approach:

«وَإِنْ أَمْرَأَةٌ خَافَتْ مِنْ بَعْلِهَا نُشُوزًا أَوْ إِعْرَاضًا، فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ يُصْلِحَا بَيْنَهُمَا صُلْحًا، وَالصُّلْحُ خَيْرٌ، وَأُحْضِرَتِ الْأَنْفُسُ الشُّحَّ، وَإِنْ تُحْسِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا» ﴿النساء ١٢٨﴾

«And if a woman fears from her husband contempt or evasion, there is no sin upon them if they make terms of settlement between them — and settlement is (always) best. And present in (human) souls is stinginess. But if you do good and revere Allāh — indeed, Allāh is ever Aware of all what you do.»²

Communication and Company

IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION

The two spouses should maintain a high level of communication between them. They should share their happiness, concerns, and sorrows. That preserves their ties of love and compassion, and fulfills the meaning of “dwelling” that should be established between them, as

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

² *An-Nisā* 4:128.

was discussed in the first part of this series.¹

It was the Prophet's (ﷺ) regular practice to visit all of his wives every night, chatting lightly with each, before going to the one who had her turn for that night. The long *ḥadīth* of Umm Zar' (fully cited in a later chapter), is a good example of the beneficial chatting that took place between the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Mother of the Believers 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها).

REGULATIONS FOR DESERTION

There are, of course, situations where it is permissible to desert another Muslim as a form of retribution. As an example, we will be discussing later the permission in *Islām* to desert the bed of a rebellious wife, and we will study instances where the Prophet (ﷺ) deserted some or all of his wives.

However, deserting another Muslim should not be done except after exhausting easier approaches, and with the understanding that it is being implemented as a temporary form of treatment. Long-term abandonment brings repulsion and hardness of the heart² and is therefore prohibited.

Abū Hurayrah, Ibn 'Umar, Abū Ayyūb, and other companions (رضي الله عنهم) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«لَا يَحِلُّ لِمُسْلِمٍ أَنْ يَهْجُرَ أَخَاهُ فَوْقَ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ.»

«It is not permissible for a Muslim to abandon his brother for more than three days.»³

In many of his *ḥadīths*, the Prophet (ﷺ) emphasized the gravity of deserting a Muslim. For example, Hishām Bin 'Amir (رضي الله عنه) reported that he heard Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) say:

«لَا يَحِلُّ لِمُسْلِمٍ أَنْ يَصَارِمَ مُسْلِمًا فَوْقَ ثَلَاثٍ، فَإِنَّهُمَا نَاكِبَانِ»

¹ Review “The Quest for Love & Mercy” by the author.

² As the English saying goes, “Out of sight, out of mind.”

³ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

عن الحق ما داماً على صِرامهما. وإن أولهما فيساً يكون
كفارة عنه سبقه بالفِيء. وإن ماتا على صِرامهما لم يدخل
الجنة جميعاً أبداً. وإن سلّم عليه، فأبى أن يقبل تسليمه
وسلامه، ردّ عليه ملك، ورد على الآخر شيطاناً.»

«It is not permissible for a Muslim to abandon another Muslim for more than three (nights). Indeed, they both are straying off the right (path) while they continue their abandonment. As for the first of them to conciliate, his lead to conciliation would surely expiate his sin. And indeed, if they die in that state (of dissention), they will never both enter *Jannah*. And if one of them gives *salām* to the other, but he refuses to accept his *salām* and peace, an angel would respond to him (with *salām*), whereas a devil would respond to the other (because of his silence).»¹

Aiding One Another

THE OBLIGATION OF MUTUAL HELP

Being sworn partners of good standing, the two spouses should do all that is within their capacity to help each other and make their partnership successful. That includes physical, monetary, and emotional support.

When one of the two spouses is performing a **permissible** act, it is **recommended** for the other spouse to help him (or her) to the best of his (or her) ability. And when one of the two spouses is performing an **obligation**, it is **incumbent** on the other spouse to help him (or her) to the best of his (or her) ability. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

¹ Recorded by Ahmad, al-Bukhārī (in *al-Adab ul-Mufrad*) and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 2029).

«وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ (٢) المائدة ٢

«Help one another in righteousness and *taqwā*, and do not help one another in sinning and transgression. And fear and revere Allāh; verily, Allāh is severe in punishment.»¹

ONE MAY NOT BE AIDED IN DISOBEYING ALLĀH

On the other hand, we conclude from the above *āyah* that when one of the two spouses performs a **makrūh** (disapproved) act, it is **disapproved** for the other spouse to help him (or her). And when one of the two spouses performs a **prohibited** act, it is **prohibited** for the other spouse to help him (or her). 'Alī (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«لا طاعة لبشر في معصية الله، إنما الطاعة في المعروف.»

«Obedience may not be offered to a human being if it involves disobeying Allāh. Obedience should only be in good things.»²

AIDING EACH OTHER IN ACTS OF WORSHIP AND OBEDIENCE

An individual by himself may sometimes weaken or slacken in performing some acts of worship. Kind help and support would bring him added confidence and determination. And who is more suitable for giving that support than one's own spouse? A fine example on this is given by the Prophet (ﷺ) concerning the night prayers. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

¹ *Al-Mā'idah* 5:2.

² Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others. A similar *hadīth* is recorded by Ahmad and others from 'Imrān Bin Ḥusayn (رضي الله عنه) and verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*as-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 179,180).

«رَحِمَ اللَّهُ رجلاً قام من الليل فصلى، وأيقظ امرأته فصلت،
فإن أبت نضح في وجهها الماء. ورحم الله امرأة قامت من الليل
فصلت، وأيقظت زوجها فصلى، فإن أبى نضحت في وجهه الماء.»

«May Allāh have mercy on a man who wakes up at night and prays, and wakes up his wife to pray — and if she resists, he would lightly spray water on her face; and may Allāh have mercy on a woman who wakes up at night and prays, and wakes up her husband to pray — and if he resists, she would lightly spray water on his face.»¹

One should note in this *ḥadīth* the friendly and pleasant manner of waking the other spouse. In the middle of his sleep, a person will surely be very alarmed by someone abruptly shaking him or pouring a bucket of cold water over him, which would then make him reluctant to cooperate with the individual who caused him that annoyance and bother. On the other hand, nice and friendly approach should normally result in good cooperation.

Safeguarding the Family

We discussed earlier in this chapter that both the man and woman have a major responsibility in the family. Part of that responsibility is to protect the family from damage or destruction. That can only be done through steering the family toward the good teachings of *Islām* and away from the evils of Satan and his followers.

Therefore, the two spouses must help each other in guiding their children toward *Jannah* and away from the Fire. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا

i Recorded by Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Saḥīḥ ul-Jāmiʿ* no. 3494).

النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ» التحريم ٦

«O you who believe! Protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones.»¹

Commenting on this *āyah*, it is reported that ‘Alī (ؓ) said:

“Teach them the good manners and educate them.”²

And Ibn ‘Abbās (ؓ) said:

“Act in obedience to Allāh, avoid disobedience to Allāh, and command your families to act in remembrance (of Allāh): Allāh would then save you from the Fire.”³

Enjoining the Good and Forbidding the Wrong

The two spouses should help each other in enjoining the good and forbidding the wrong, first toward one another, and then with other people. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ، يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ، وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ، وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ، وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ، وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ. أُولَٰئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ. إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ۝ وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَمَسَاكِنَ طَيِّبَةً فِي جَنَّاتِ عَدْنٍ، وَرِضْوَانٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ، ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ۝» التوبة ٧١-٧٢

¹ *At-Tahrīm* 66:6.

² *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*.

³ *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*.

«The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin the right, forbid the wrong, establish prayer, give *zakāh*, and obey Allāh and His Messenger. As for those, Allāh will have mercy upon them. Indeed! Allāh is Mighty and Wise.

Allāh has promised the believing men and believing women gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally, and pleasant dwellings in gardens of everlasting bliss (ʿAdn or Eden); but the greatest bliss is the good acceptance from Allāh: That is surely the great achievement.»¹

Fulfilling Each Others' Desire

We have discussed in the first book of this series² that one of the main objectives of marriage is the preservation of chastity. This generally pertains more to the man than the woman; but it surely applies to the woman as well, as it is her husband's obligation to gratify her to the best of his ability.

Thus, it is an obligation on each of the two spouses to fulfill his (or her) marital duty toward the other spouse. They should both do all that they can, provided that it is *Islāmically* permissible, to protect one another from Satan's temptations. More of this will be discussed in the next two chapters, and a detailed discussion of the acts of intimacy between the two spouses was presented in the second book of this series.³

¹ At-*Fawbah* 9:71-72.

² Review "The Quest for Love & Mercy" by the author.

³ Review "Closer Than a Garment" by the author.

THE HUSBAND'S OBLIGATIONS TOWARD HIS WIFE

The Woman's Rights

CULTURES PRIOR TO *ISLĀM*

In the ancient nations and societies that deviated from the pure Revelation, the woman was considered a tradable commodity. She was believed to be a filthy being from the making of Satan. That notion of the woman was largely present even in Jewish and Christian texts and scriptures.

Similarly, the woman's position was extremely bad during *Jāhiliyyah*. She was considered part of her father's or husband's property; thus, she was transferred by inheritance like other parts of the estate. The Arabs regarded the birth of a baby girl a bad omen, and would often get rid of her by burying her alive.

The woman's status and rights are only established in Allāh's fair guidance, which was brought by His messengers through the ages. After the alteration or obliteration of all of the previous messages, *Islām* came to crown all of those messages with a most perfect guidance from Allāh, leaving no detail untouched, and reestablishing the right position for the woman. She is not a lesser being that the man may humiliate and oppress at convenience. Rather, she is his counterpart. ʿĀ'ishah, Anas, and Umm Sulaym (رضي الله عنهن) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إِنَّمَا النِّسَاءُ شَقَاتُ الرِّجَالِ.»

«Indeed, the women are only the full sisters of men.»¹

¹ Recorded by Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-

THE WOMAN'S RIGHTS IN ISLĀM

The woman's rights are ordained by Allāh, and no one may violate them for any reason. Al-Miqdām (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إن الله تعالى يوصيكم بالنساء خيراً، فإنهن أمهاتكم وبناتكم وخالاتكم. إن الرجل من أهل الكتاب يُزوّج المرأة وما تعلق يداها الخيط، فما يرغبُ واحدٌ منهما عن صاحبه.»

«Indeed, Allāh (ﷻ) commands you to be good to the women; indeed, they are your mothers, daughters, and (maternal) aunts. Indeed, a man from the People of the Book would be married to a woman who can hardly know how to pull a string, and yet, none of them would want to depart from his companion.»¹

The woman's lesser physical strength is not, by any means, a justification for the man to overstep her rights. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إني أخرجُ عليكم حقَّ الضعيفين: اليتيم والمرأة.»

«I strongly admonish you in regard to the right of the two weak ones: the orphan and the woman.»²

THE WIFE'S RIGHTS IN ISLĀM

The wife's rights on her husband are clearly ordained and strongly established in *Islām*. Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) gave the following

Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 1983, 2333).

- 1 Recorded by at-Ṭabarānī in al-Kabīr. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Da'īf ul-Jāmi'* no. 1763, with a note by Zuhayr ash-Shāwīsh indicating the al-Albānī had subsequently considered it *ḥasan*).
- 2 Recorded by Aḥmad, Ibn Mājah, and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*as-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1015 & *Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 2447).

instruction to a number of his companions, including 'Uthman Bin Maṣ'ūn¹ and 'Abdullāh Bin 'Amr² (رضي الله عنه):

«إن لزوجك عليك حقاً.»

«Your wife has a right upon you.»³

'Amr Bin al-Aḥwaṣ (رضي الله عنه) reported⁴ that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«ألا إن لكم على نساءكم حقاً، ولنساءكم عليكم حقاً.»

«Lo! you have rights on your women, and your women have rights on you.»⁵

Fulfilling the wife's rights is an indication of *taqwā*: revering Allāh and fearing His punishment. It is a trust between the man and his Lord (ﷻ), and He will question him about that trust. Jābir (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«اتقوا الله في النساء، فإنكم أخذتموهن بأمانة الله، واستحللتم فروجهن بكلمة الله، ولهن عليكم رزقهن وكسوتهن بالمعروف.»

«Have *taqwā* of Allāh in regard to your women. Indeed, you took them (in marriage) through a trust with Allāh, and had access to their private parts by Allāh's word (permission). They have a right on you — that you provide them with food and clothing in a fitting manner.»⁶

1 The full *ḥadīth* is cited in Chapter 1.

2 The full *ḥadīth* is cited later in this chapter.

3 Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

4 The full *ḥadīth* is cited p. 3.

5 Recorded by at-Tirmithī, an-Nasā'ī, and Ibn Mājah. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 7880 & *Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 2030).

6 Recorded by Muslim and Abū Dāwūd as part of Jābir's long *ḥadīth* describing the Prophet's (ﷺ) *Hajj*.

The woman has rights and obligations. Her rights must be fulfilled in a serious and fair manner. This is an important requirement in *Islām*; neglecting it constitutes a clear act of disobedience and threatens the well-being of the family and the Muslim society.

With this introduction, we go on to discuss some of the rights that are specifically related to the women in *Islām*.

Protection

AN IMPORTANT OBLIGATION UPON THE HUSBAND

Security and safety are most important for a human being. One needs to feel reasonably secure in order to function normally and perform one's regular tasks.

The wife is usually the weaker of the two spouses, and looks to her husband for protection. Thus, one of the husband's most important obligations is providing protection for his wife. This is part of his responsibility as leader of the family:

«الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ
وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ» النساء ٣٤

«Men are in charge of women by (right of) what (qualities) Allāh has given one over the other and what they spend (in support) from their wealth.»¹

This *āyah* shows that Allāh gave leadership (or *qawāmah*) to the man because of certain qualities that would normally enable him to conduct such a responsibility. A most important quality of a leader is his ability to protect his followers and provide for them an atmosphere of security and harmony.

Protection is a general term that covers physical, emotional, and other forms of well-being. The husband must strive to protect his wife in all of those respects. Some details in this regard will be discussed

¹ *An-Nisā* 4:34.

in the subsequent sections.

GHAYRAH

As a demonstration of a man's love toward his wife, he should have *ghayrah* for her. *Ghayrah* is the great concern about her well-being, and the zeal to protect her from anything that might harm her person, such as an evil touch, word, or look.

But *ghayrah* should not reach the point of distrusting and suspecting her without reason, nor should it be for the purpose of finding possible mistakes. Jābir Bin 'Atik (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إن من الغيرة ما يحب الله، ومنها ما يبغض الله. فأما الغيرة التي يحب الله، فالغيرة في ربة. وأما التي يبغض الله، فالغيرة في غير ربة.»

«Indeed, there is a form of *ghayrah* that Allāh loves, and a form that Allāh hates. *Ghayrah* that Allāh loves is that which is based on (valid) suspicion. And *ghayrah* that Allāh hates is that which is without (valid) suspicion.»¹

A person without *ghayrah* is called *dayyūth*. A *dayyūth* is a person who has no sense of protection or honor regarding his wife. As we discussed in the second book of this series², a *dayyūth* will not enter *Jannah*.

AVOIDING UNNECESSARY SUSPICION

As is indicated in the above sub-section, one should not nurture unjustifiable doubts about his wife, nor should he dig for mistakes for which he would then blame her.

¹ Recorded by Ahmad, Abū Dāwūd, and others. Verified to be *hasan* by al-Albānī (*Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 1999).

² See "Closer than a Garment" by the author.

For this reason, the Prophet (ﷺ) prohibited a man from coming unexpectedly to his home. Jābir (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إذا أطال أحدكم الغيبة فلا يطرق أهله ليلاً.» متفق

«When one of you is back from a long journey, he should not suddenly come to his family by night.»¹

Similarly, Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported:

“Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) never came to his families (after a journey) by night. He would either come to them during the morning or the afternoon.”²

SAFEGUARDING HER SECRETS

It is greatly prohibited for a man to expose his wife's secrets, especially in matters of privacy that no person would normally know except the husband, such as birthmarks, reaction to some intimate acts, and so on.

Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إن من أشد الناس عند الله منزلة يوم القيامة الرجل يفضي إلى امرأته، وتفضي إليه، ثم ينشر سرها.»

«Indeed, among the people who will have the most grievous position before Allāh on the Day of Resurrection is a man who, after he privately approaches his wife and she privately approaches him, he exposes her secrets.»³

Exposing the wife's secrets brings mistrust and fear into her heart,

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

² Recorded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

³ Recorded by Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, and others.

and could be an indication of a man's inclination toward being a *dayyūth*.

Financial Support

PART OF THE QĀWĀMAH OBLIGATIONS

One of the husband's major responsibilities toward his wife and family is providing financial support. This responsibility is one of the important reasons for which Allāh appointed the man as the head of the family:

«الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ» النساء ٣٤

«Men are in charge of women by (right of) what (qualities) Allāh has given one over the other and what they spend (in support) from their wealth.»¹

In Jābir's (رضي الله عنه) *ḥadīth* that we cited earlier, Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«ولهنّ عليكم رزقهنّ وكسوتهنّ بالمعروف.»

«They (your women) have a right on you — that you provide them with food and clothing in a fitting manner.»²

ACCORDING TO HIS CAPABILITY

The financial support required from the husband is in accordance with his financial capability. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

¹ *An-Nisā'* 4:34.

² Recorded by Muslim and Abū Dāwūd.

«لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا» البقرة ٢٨٦

«Allāh does not burden a person beyond his capacity.»¹

The husband is not required to give more than what he has, nor is he allowed to provide inadequate support when he can afford giving more. Allāh (ﷻ) says in regard to the women who get divorced before being touched:

«وَمَتَّعُوهُنَّ عَلَى الْمَوْسِعِ قَدَرُهُ، وَعَلَى الْمُقْتِرِ قَدَرُهُ،
مَتَّعًا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ، حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ» البقرة ٢٣٦

«Give them (the divorced) compensation — the wealthy according to his capability, and the poor according to his capability — a provision according to what is reasonable, a duty upon the good-doers.»²

And Allāh (ﷻ) says in regard to supporting the divorced women during their 'iddah (waiting period):

«لِيُنْفِقَ ذُو سَعَةٍ مِّن سَعَتِهِ، وَمَن قُدِرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقُهُ فَلْيُنْفِقْ مِمَّا
ءَاتَاهُ اللَّهُ؛ لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا مَّا آتَاهَا. سَيَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ
عُسْرٍ يُسْرًا» الطلاق ٧

«Let a man of wealth spend from his wealth; and as for him whose provision is restricted — let him spend from what Allāh has given him. Allāh does not require from a soul except (according to) what He has given it. Allāh will bring about, after hardship, ease.»³

¹ Al-Baqarah 2:286.

² Al-Baqarah 2:236.

³ At-Talāq 65:7.

SELF-SUFFICIENCY

A man must seriously view his financial responsibility toward his wife and family. He should not look to others for help before he has exhausted all possible means of becoming independent and self-sufficient. Self-sufficiency brings a feeling of security and dignity to the whole family, and is therefore a goal that deserves earnest pursuit.

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«وَاللَّهِ لَأَن يَغْدُوَ أَحَدُكُمْ فَيَحْتَطِبَ عَلَى ظَهْرِهِ، فَيَبِيعَهُ وَيَسْتَفْنِي
بِذَلِكَ وَيَتَصَدَّقَ مِنْهُ، خَيْرٌ لَهُ مِنْ أَن يَأْتِيَ رَجُلًا فَيَسْأَلَهُ، يُوْتِيَهُ أَوْ
يَمْنَعُهُ، وَذَلِكَ أَن الْيَدَ الْعُلْيَا خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْيَدِ السُّفْلَى. وَأَبْدَأُ بِمَنْ تَعُولُ.»

«By Allāh, for one of you to go in the morning, collect firewood, carry it on his back, and sell it to suffice himself and give charity from it: that is better for him than going to a man and asking him — he either giving or denying him. That is because the upper (giving) hand is better than the lower (taking) hand. And start (giving) to those for whom you are responsible.»

Someone asked, "For whom am I responsible, O Allāh's Messenger?" He (ﷺ) replied:

«أَمْرَأَتُكَ مِمَّنْ تَعُولُ، وَجَارِيَتُكَ، وَوَلَدُكَ.»

«Your wife is of those for whom you are responsible, as well as your slave girl and your child.»¹

It is unfortunate to observe that many Muslim men in the West rely strongly or solely on financial aid or public assistance — when they have the means of sufficing themselves, as in the above *ḥadīth*. It is also pathetic to note that there are cases where a man would marry two

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others. The last portion is recorded by ad-Dāraquṭnī and Aḥmad (*Irwā' ul-Ghālīl* no. 834).

or more wives and have them all live off public assistance while he conducts an irresponsible life, not performing his duty of supporting them, but rather, in some cases, taking the money that they thus earn and using it for his own purposes!

A HIGHLY REWARDABLE CHARITY

Besides being an obligation upon the man, spending on his wife and family counts as charity for him.

‘Amr Bin Umayyah ad-Damrī (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«ما أعطى الرجلُ امرأتهُ فهو صدقة.»

«Whatever a man gives to his wife is a charity (in his record).»¹

Abū Mas‘ūd al-Anṣārī (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إذا أنفق الرجلُ على أهله نفقةً يحسبُها كانت له صدقة.»

«When a Muslim spends on his family, thereby seeking Allāh’s reward, it is regarded as *ṣadaqah* for him.»²

Sa’d Bin Abī Waqqāṣ (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إنك مهما أنفقت على أهلِكَ من نفقةٍ فإنك تُوَجَّرُ،

حتى اللقمة ترفعها إلى في امرأتِكَ.»

«Indeed, whatever money you spend on your family, you will be rewarded for it — even for a morsel of

¹ Recorded by Ahmad. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*as-Sahīḥah* no. 1024 & *Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi’* no. 5540).

² Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

food that you raise to your wife’s mouth.»¹

Al-Miqdām Bin Ma’dī Yakrib (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«ما أطعمتَ نفسك فهو لك صدقة، وما أطعمتَ ولدَكَ

فهو لك صدقة، وما أطعمتَ زوجَكَ فهو لك صدقة،

وما أطعمتَ خادمَكَ فهو لك صدقة.»

«Whatever you feed yourself is a charity for you, whatever you feed your child is a charity for you, whatever you feed your wife is a charity for you, and whatever you feed your servant is a charity for you.»²

THE BEST FORM OF SPENDING

A man’s concern should first be about reasonably sufficing his wife and family — even before giving money for Allāh’s cause. Jābir Bin Samurah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إذا أعطى الله أحدكم خيراً فليبدأ بنفسه وأهل بيته.»

«When Allāh gives one of you some good (i.e., sustenance), he should start by (spending on) himself and his family members.»³

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said;

«دينارٌ أنفقته في سبيل الله، ودينارٌ أنفقته في رقية، ودينارٌ

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

² Recorded by Ahmad, aṭ-Ṭabarānī (in *al-Kabīr*), and al-Bukhārī (in *al-Adab ul-Mufrad*). Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*as-Sahīḥah* no. 452).

³ Recorded by Muslim, Ahmad, and others.

تصدقته به على مسكين، ودينار أنفقته على أهيك، أعظمها
أجراً الذي أنفقته على أهيك.»

«A *dīnār* that you spend for Allāh's cause (i.e., *jihād*), a *dīnār* that you contribute toward freeing a slave, a *dīnār* that you give as charity to a needy person, and a *dīnār* that you spend on your family: the one yielding the greatest reward is that which you spend on your family.»¹

ADEQUATE SUPPORT IS AN EARNED RIGHT FOR THE WIFE

If a man does not financially support his wife in a manner compatible with his financial resources and her needs, she would be justified to take, without his permission, a portion of his money that would suffice her and her children.

Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that Hind Bint 'Utbah² came to Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) and said, "O Allāh's Messenger! Indeed, Abū Sufyān is a stingy man. He does not give me what would suffice me and my children — except for that which I take without his knowledge." He (ﷺ) said:

«خذي من ماله بالمعروف ما يكفيك ويكفي بنيك.»

«Take of his money, in an reasonable manner, as much as would suffice you and your children.»³

THE GREAT SIN OF NEGLECT

It is a great sin for a man to neglect appropriately supporting his wife and dependents. 'Abdullāh Bin 'Amr (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

¹ Recorded by Muslim.

² Mu'āwiyah's mother.

³ Recorded by Muslim.

«كفى إثماً أن تحبسَ عمن تملك قوته.»

«A sufficient sin for you would be that you hold (support) off those whom you are responsible for feeding.»¹

In another report, 'Abdullāh Bin 'Amr (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«كفى بالمرء إثماً أن يضيع من يقوت.»

«A sufficient sin for a person would be that he neglects those whom he feeds.»²

PROVIDING HER WITH FOOD, CLOTHING, AND OTHER BASIC NEEDS

The wife's right for financial support includes food and clothing. Allāh (ﷻ) says in regard to the nursing mothers:

«وَعَلَى الْمَوْلُودِ لَهُ رِزْقُهُنَّ وَكِسْوَتُهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ» البقرة ٢٣٣

«Upon the father is their (the mothers') provision and clothing according to what is reasonable.»³

The same meaning is seen in the above *ḥadīth* of Jābir (p. 27). Similarly, Mu'āwiyah Bin Ḥaydah al-Qushayrī (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«حق المرأة على الزوج إن يطعمها إذا طعم، ويكسوها إذا اكتسى،

ولا يضرب الوجه، ولا يقبح، ولا يهجر إلا في البيت.»

«A woman's right on her husband is that he feeds her when he eats, clothes her when he clothes

¹ Recorded by Muslim.

² Recorded by Ahmad, Abū Dāwūd, and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 4481 & *Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 894).

³ *Al-Baqarah* 2:233.

himself, avoids hitting her face, avoids despising her (by words or actions), and avoids deserting her — except within the same house.»¹

In another report, Mu'āwiyah Bin Ḥaydah (رضي الله عنه) said that he asked the Prophet (ﷺ), "O Allāh's Messenger! What is the right of one's wife upon him?" He (ﷺ) replied:

«أَنْ تَطْعَمَهَا إِذَا طَعَمْتَ، وَتَكْسُوَهَا إِذَا اكْتَسَيْتَ، وَلَا تَقْبَحَ
الْوَجْهَ، وَلَا تَضْرِبَ، وَلَا تَهْجُرَ إِلَّا فِي الْبَيْتِ، كَيْفَ وَقَدْ أَفْضَى
بَعْضُكُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ - إِلَّا بِمَا حَلَّ عَلَيْهِنَ.»

«(Her right upon you is) that you feed her when you feed yourself, clothe her when you clothe yourself, avoid cursing her face, avoid hitting her, and avoid deserting her except within the same house — especially that you have come to be so intimate with each other — except in things that would make it permissible to punish her.»²

PROVIDING A REASONABLE DWELLING

It is a right for the wife to be reasonably housed — in accordance with her husband's capability. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«أَسْكِنُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ سَكَنْتُمْ مِنْ وَجْدِكُمْ،
وَلَا تُضَارُّهُنَّ لِتُضَيِّقُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ» الطلاق ٦

«Lodge them (the divorced) according to what you reside out of your means, and do not harass them in

¹ Recorded by at-Tabarānī (in *al-Kabīr*), al-Hākim, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 3149 & *Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 2033).
² Recorded by Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, and Ibn Mājah. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ Abī Dāwūd* no. 1875-1877 & *Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 2033).

order to make life difficult for them.»¹

Even though this *āyah* directly applies to the divorced women during their waiting period, its meaning is more general. It also applies to all those for whom a man is responsible; most importantly: his wife and children.

THE DOWRY

The *ṣadāq* or *mahr* (dowry) is the first financial right of a woman upon her husband. It becomes due as soon as the marriage contract is performed. We have discussed this subject in the first book² of this series, so we refer the reader to it for more details.

Kind Treatment and Compassion

AN OBLIGATION UPON THE HUSBAND

The wife has the right to be respected and treated kindly. This is not an optional favor from her husband. It is an obligation established through a divine command. What a man cannot control (the heart's inclination) must not affect the way he treats his wife. Allāh (ﷻ) commands:

«وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ، فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا
شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا ۝ النساء ١٩

«Live with them (your wives) in kindness; even if you dislike them, perhaps you dislike something in which Allāh has placed much good.»³

¹ *At-Talāq* 65:6.

² See "The Quest for Love & Mercy" by the author.

³ *An-Nisā* 4:19.

TOKEN OF HIS GOOD NATURE

Rendering kindness to the wife is a sign of good nature and righteousness. The Prophet (ﷺ) gave the perfect example of how a righteous believer should treat his wife. 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«خيركم خيركم لأهله، وأنا خيركم لأهلي.»¹

«The best of you are those who are best to his family, and I am the best of you toward my family.»¹

Abū Hurayrah, Ibn 'Abbās, and others (رضي الله عنهم) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«خيركم خياركم لنسائهم (لأهله).»²

«The best among you are those who are best to their women (or family).»²

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«أكمل المؤمنين إيماناً أحسنهم خلقاً، وخيارهم خيارهم لنسائهم.»³

«The believers who are most complete in faith are those of best manners; and the best among them are those who are best (in treatment) to their women.»³

UNDERSTANDING THE WOMAN'S FRAGILE NATURE

The woman has a fragile nature, both physically and emotionally. Understanding this enables the man to treat her with consideration and

¹ Recorded by at-Tirmithī, Ibn Hibbān, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*as-Sahīhah* no. 285).

² Recorded by Aḥmad, at-Tirmithī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Sahīh ul-Jāmi'* no. 3265, 3266, 3316).

³ Recorded by at-Tirmithī and Ibn Hibbān. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*as-Sahīhah* no. 284).

compassion.

Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported that once Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) was on a journey, and had his wives, as well as Umm Sulaym, with him. He had for the women an Abyssinian camel-driver called Anjashah. He would sing lyrics as he drove the camels, and his singing would cause the women's camels to go faster. So Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) told him:

«ويحك يا أنجشة! رويدك سؤفك بالقوارير.»

«Woe be to you, O Anjashah! Go slow in your (singing while) driving the (fragile) vessels!»²

According to a number of scholars, including al-Bukhārī, al-Qurṭibī, and al-'Asqalānī, Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) meant two things by this:

1. The women have a delicate nature and weak build, and driving them too fast could make them fall or harm them in other ways.
2. The women have an emotional nature and are thus easy to be moved by singing and poetry, which could affect their hearts and bring *fitnah* to them.

UNDERSTANDING AND COPING WITH THE WIFE'S ATTITUDE

Every person would have an attitude of anger from time to time — the wife being no exception. One should not make his wife's occasional anger a means of retaliation and revenge. Rather, one should deal with that jokingly or with light spirits, following the Prophet's (ﷺ) example. 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that one day Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said to her:

«إني لأعلم إذا كنت عني راضية، وإذا كنت علي غضبية.»

«أما إذا كنت عني راضية، فإنك تقولين: لا ورب محمد.»

¹ Note that we derived this book's title from this *hadīth*.

² Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

وإذا كنتَ عليّ غضبي قلت: لا وربّ إبراهيم.

«Indeed, I know when you are pleased with me, and when you are angry: When you are pleased with me you say (while making an oath), “No, by the Lord of Muḥammad.” And when you are angry with me you say, “No, by the Lord of Ibrāhīm.”»

She replied, “Yes indeed, by Allāh, O Allāh’s Messenger! I do not abandon (when angry) except your name.”¹

UNDERSTANDING THE WOMAN’S DIFFERENT NATURE (THE BENT RIB)

When the woman makes a mistake, her husband should maintain patience and kindness, realizing that some of what may appear as mistakes is probably not so. The woman has a different nature from the man’s, and thus may take actions different from what he would.

The Prophet (ﷺ) indicated that the woman (Ḥawwā’ or Eve) was originally created from the man’s (Ādam’s) rib. By nature, the rib is bent. Thus, a woman’s nature will never totally coincide with a man’s: There is a bend between them.

It may be equally true to say that, from a woman’s viewpoint, there is a bend in the man’s nature, which means that his actions will never completely coincide with hers.

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) ordered:

«استوصوا بالنساء خيراً، فإن المرأة خلقت من ضلعٍ أعوج،

وإن أعوج شيءٍ في الضلعٍ أعلاه؛ فإذا ذهبَ تقيمه كسرته،

وإن تركته لم يزلْ أعوج؛ فاستوصوا بالنساء خيراً.»

«Take good care of women, because the woman was created from a bent rib, and the most curved part of a rib is its upper end. If you insist on straightening it, you will break it; and if you leave it, it will

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and Aḥmad.

remain bent. So take good care of women.»¹

The reference in this *ḥadīth* to the rib’s upper end seems to point to the head, which houses major human faculties (seeing and hearing) and the tongue that performs the speaking. The head is also the part of the body where the thinking process takes place. Ibn Ḥajar (رحمته الله) said:

“It is possible that he (ﷺ) gave this as example for the uppermost part of the woman, because her uppermost part is her head: It encases her tongue from which harm comes.”²

This means that the difference between the man and woman is mostly in their different approach to dealing with issues that require thinking, the way they perceive things, and the way they emotionally react (by laughing, cursing, lying, etc) under different circumstances.

Similarly, Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) ordered:

«من كان يؤمن بالله واليوم الآخر، فإذا شهد أمراً فليتكلم

بخيرٍ أو ليسكت، واستوصوا بالنساء، فإن المرأة خلقت من

ضلعٍ، وإن أعوج شيءٍ في الضلعٍ أعلاه؛ إن ذهبَ تقيمه

كسرته، وإن تركته لم يزلْ أعوج. استوصوا بالنساء خيراً.»

«He who believes in Allāh and the Last Day, when witnessing a matter, should say a good thing or remain silent. Take good care of women, because the woman was created from a rib, and the most curved part of a rib is the top part. So if you insist on straightening it you break it, and if you leave it, it will remain bent. So take good care of women.»³

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

² *Fath ul-Bārī* no. 5186.

³ Recorded by Muslim.

The advice in this report in regard to saying good things confirms what we have pointed out — that the head, being the source of speech, is also the source of difference between the man and woman and is the thing of which they both need to be watchful.

Samurah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إن المرأة خلقت من ضلع، وإنك إن ترد إقامة الضلع تكسرها،
فدارها تعيش بها.»

«The woman was created from a rib. If you try to straighten the rib, you would break it. So be kind to her, you would then live in joy with her.»¹

In this report, the Prophet (ﷺ) describes forcing a woman to change some of her attitudes as the breaking of a rib, and breaking the rib here means divorce. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إن المرأة خلقت من ضلع، لن تستقيم لك على طريقة.
فإن استمتعت بها، أستمعت بها وبها عوج؛
وإن ذهبت تقيمها كسرتها، وكسرها طلاقها.»

«The woman was created from a rib. She will not be straight according to your way. If you want to enjoy her, you will have to enjoy her with her twist. And if you try to straighten her, you would break her; and breaking her is divorcing her.»²

LOOKING AT THE WIFE'S BETTER SIDE

We conclude from the above that a man should overlook some of his wife's mistakes — as long as they are not sins. The Prophet (ﷺ)

1 Recorded by Aḥmad, Ibn Ḥibbān, and al-Ḥākim. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 1944).

2 Recorded by Muslim and at-Tirmidhī.

indicates that changing some of a woman's attitudes is difficult or even impossible.

Just like the man, a woman is not perfect. To enjoy the marriage, the man must forgive and overlook some of her actions that he dislikes. At the same time, he should acknowledge her actions that he likes. Surely, in most cases, her good points will overwhelm the bad ones. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئاً وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ
خَيْراً كَثِيراً ﴿١٩﴾ النساء

«Even if you dislike them (your wives), perhaps you dislike something in which Allāh has placed much good.»¹

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«لا يفركن مؤمن مؤمنة؛ إن كره منها خلقاً رضي منها غيرَه.»

«Let not a believing man hate a believing woman; if he dislikes a character in her, he would be pleased by other characters.»²

Dwelling only on the bad side while ignoring the good side is a certain way to destroying the marriage. If men ignore this fact, misery and depression will fill their marriage, and this may lead to divorce.

ENTERTAINING THE WIFE

It is recommended for a man to be playful with his wife and do lawful things that would entertain her and bring joy to her heart. This was the practice of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) with his wives, as is extensively reported by 'Ā'ishah and other Mothers of the Believers (رضي الله عنهن). A good example is the *ḥadīth* about Umm Zar', presented at the end of this book.

1 *An-Nisā'* 4:19.

2 Recorded by Muslim and Aḥmad.

Jābir Bin ‘Abdillāh and Jābir Bin ‘Umayr (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«كل شيء ليس فيه ذكر الله فهو لغو وسهو ولعب، إلا أربع
خصال: ملاعبة الرجل امرأته، وتأديب الرجل فرسه، ومشية
بين الغرضين، وتعليم الرجل السباحة.»

«Everything that does not involve remembrance of Allāh is futile, senseless, and wasted — except for four acts: a man entertaining his wife, a man training his horse, a man walking between the two posts (when practicing archery), and teaching swimming to another man.»¹

GIVING SALĀM TO THE WIFE AND FAMILY

It is an obligation on a Muslim to give *salām* to the other Muslims when he meets them. This obligation is more confirmed with one’s own family. Instead of using non-Islāmic greetings, such as, “Hi,” “Good Morning,” “Bye,” “Have a Nice Day,” etc., one should use the blessed greeting of *Islām*.

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إن للإسلام صُوىً ومناراً كمنار الطريق؛ منها أن تؤمن بالله ولا
تشرك به شيئاً، وإقام الصلاة، وإيتاء الزكاة، وصوم رمضان،
وحج البيت، والأمر بالمعروف، والنهي عن المنكر، وأن تسلم على
أهلك إذا دخلت عليهم، وأن تسلم على القوم إذا مررت بهم؛
فمن ترك من ذلك شيئاً، فقد ترك سهماً من الإسلام؛ ومن تركهن
كلهن، فقد ولّى الإسلام ظهره.»

¹ Recorded by an-Nasā’ī. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi’* no. 4534 and *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 315).

«Indeed, *Islām* has landmarks and minarets like road minarets; among them is believing in Allāh and joining nothing (in worship) with Him, establishing the prayer, giving the *zakāh*, fasting in *Ramādān*, performing *Hajj* to the House, enjoining the right, forbidding the wrong, greeting your family with *salām* when you meet them, and greeting the people with *salām* when you pass by them. Whoever drops one of that has surely dropped a portion of *Islām*, and whoever drops all of that has surely turned his back on *Islām*.»¹

FAIRNESS AND JUSTICE

It is an obligation on the husband, being the chief of the family, to treat his wife and family with fairness and justice. Failing to do so is an indication of his failure in running the family.

The husband should not use his material or physical superiority to oppress his wife. We have discussed in the previous chapter the prohibition of oppression. Here, we only cite again the *ḥadīth* of Jābir Bin ‘Abdillāh and ‘Abdullāh Bin ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«اتَّقُوا الظُّلْمَ، فَإِنَّ الظُّلْمَ ظُلُمَاتٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.»

«Avoid oppression, because oppression will result in deep darkness on the Day of Resurrection.»²

Coping with Multiple Wives

FAIRNESS IS A CONDITION FOR POLYGAMY

Even though *Islām* permits marrying up to four wives, it conditions

¹ Recorded by Ibn Salām (in *al-Īmān*), al-Hākim, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 333).

² Recorded by Muslim and others.

that with justice. Allāh says:

﴿وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تُقْسِطُوا فِي الْيَتَامَىٰ فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ
النِّسَاءِ مَثْنَىٰ وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبْعَ، فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً أَوْ مَا
مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ. ذَلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَعُولُوا﴾ النساء ٣

«If you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphan girls, then marry whatever pleases you of other women: two or three or four. But if you fear that you will not be just (with them) then (marry) only one woman, or those that your right hands possess (of captives and slaves). That is better in preventing you from doing injustice.»¹

Thus, if a man who cannot be fair with multiple wives is not allowed to marry more than one wife. Fairness or justice here refers to material justice, which includes giving them equal turns, being equitable with them in regard to food, clothing, and dwelling, and so on.

EQUAL TURNS

“Equal turns” means spending equal number of nights with each. This is a rule that may not be violated except in three cases:

1. If the husband is going on a journey on which he can only take one wife, he should choose by lot which of his wives will be his companion. This was the Prophet’s (ﷺ) practice, as is reported by ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها):

“When the Prophet (ﷺ) intended to go on a journey, he would draw lots among his wives. Whoever wins, he would travel with her.”²

¹ An-Nisā’ 4:3.

² Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

2. One of the wives may choose to give up her turn for another wife, as Sawdah did for ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها)¹.
3. On her wedding, a newly-wed wife gets seven consecutive nights with her husband if she is a virgin, and three consecutive nights if she is not.

Umm Salamah and Anas (رضي الله عنهما) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«للبركر سبع وللثيب ثلاث.»

«A virgin (bride) gets seven (additional) nights (with her husband), and a non-virgin gets three.»²

Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها) also reported that when the Prophet (ﷺ) married her, he stayed with her for three nights and then said to her:

«ليس بك هوانٌ على أهليكَ. إن شئتِ سبعتُ عندَكَ
وسبعتُ لنسائي، وإن شئتِ ثلثتُ ثم دُرْتُ.»

«You are not to be disgraced before your family. If you wish, I will stay seven nights with you, and then stay seven nights with each of my other wives; or if you wish, having completed three nights with you, I will now give turns.»³

A fascinating incident in regard to the current discussion occurred during the rule of ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه). Ash-Sha’bī (رضي الله عنه) reported that Ka’b Bin Sūr was sitting with ‘Umar when a woman came and said, “O Commander of the Believers! I have never seen a man better than my husband. By Allāh, he prays the night and fasts the day.” Upon hearing this, ‘Umar praised the woman and supplicated for her, and she shyly departed. Ka’b then said, “O Commander of the Believers! Shouldn’t

¹ See the biography of Sawdah in Chapter 5.

² Recorded by Muslim, Ibn Mājah, and others.

³ Recorded by Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, and Ibn Mājah.

you have considered her accusation against her husband, for she indeed was quite eloquent in her complaint!" 'Umar replied, "Why do not you judge between them, for you have understood about her situation that which I did not." Ka'b said, "I view her situation as if she has three co-wives. My judgement is to allow her husband three days and nights for worship, and one day and night for her." 'Umar said, "By Allāh, your first understanding (of her situation) is not more amazing than the second (the judgement). I hereby appoint you as judge over al-Baṣrah, and indeed, you are a remarkable judge."¹

PUNISHMENT FOR UNFAIRNESS

Unfairness toward multiple wives is an act of oppression that deserves punishment on the Day of Resurrection. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«من كانت له امرأتان، فمال إلى أحدهما (أو فلم يعدل بينهما)،

جاء يوم القيامة وشقه مائل (أو ساقط).»

«Whoever has two wives and he leans unfairly toward one of them, he will come on the Day of Resurrection with one of his sides dropping.»²

FAIRNESS DOES NOT INVOLVE FEELINGS OF THE HEART

The required fairness among the wives does not apply to love and affection — which is an uncontrollable inclination of the heart. But even then, Allāh (ﷻ) instructs that a man's strong love for one of his wives should not lead him to totally neglect one or more of his other wives:

«وَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعُوا أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ النِّسَاءِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ؛ فَلَا تَمِيلُوا

¹ Recorded by Ibn Abī Shaybah and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā'ul-Ghalīl* no. 2016).

² Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasā'ī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā'ul-Ghalīl* no. 2017 & *Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 6515).

كُلِّ الْمَيْلِ فَتَذَرُوهَا كَالْمُعَلَّقَةِ؛ وَإِنْ تُصْلِحُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ

كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١٢٩﴾ النساء

«And it will not be within your power to treat your wives with fairness (in affection), even if you should strive to do so. So do not incline completely (toward one) and leave another as if she is suspended (i.e., neither divorced nor attached). And if you amend your affairs and revere Allāh, then indeed Allāh is Forgiving and Merciful.»¹

A commonly cited *ḥadīth* concerning the current discussion is reported from 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) used to equally allot the days among his wives and then say, "O Allāh! This is my allotment in regard to what I can control, so do not blame me for that which You control but I cannot (i.e., love)." This *ḥadīth* is unauthentic.²

It should be noted that some people with limited *Islāmic* knowledge argue that this *āyah* (*an-Nisā'* 129) cancels the previous *āyah* (*an-Nisā'* 3), concluding that polygamy is therefore prohibited in *Islām*! Such a conclusion results from their misunderstanding that the two *āyāt* refer to two different and distinctive types of fairness.

Company and Intimacy

The wife has a right on her husband for emotional and physical gratification. As we have seen in the above *āyah* (*an-Nisā'* 129), it is not permissible for a man to neglect his wife so that she would be in a suspended state, not enjoying any of his love and affection. 'Abdullāh Bin 'Amr Bin al-'Aṣ (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said to him:

¹ *An-Nisā'* 4:129.

² Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmithī, and others. Verified to be weak by al-Albānī (*Irwā'ul-Ghalīl* no. 2018).

«يا عبد الله! ألم أخبر أنك تصوم النهار وتقوم الليل؟ فلا تفعل، فإنك إذا فعلت ذلك هُجِمَت عينُك، وتَفِهت نفسُك، فصم وأفطر، وقم ونم، فإن لجسدك عليك حقاً، وإن لعينيك عليك حقاً، وإن لزوجك عليك حقاً. وإن بحسبك أن تصوم من كل شهر ثلاثة أيام، فإن لك بكل حسنة عشر أمثالها، فإذا ذلك صيامُ الدهر كله.»

«O ‘Abdullāh: Haven’t I been informed that you fast the days and stand the nights (in prayer)? Do not do that, because if you did, your eye would become tired, and your body will become sick. So, fast (on some days) and break your fast (on others); and get up (for the night prayer) and sleep; for, indeed, your body has a right upon you, your eyes have a right upon you, and your wife has a right upon you. Indeed, it would suffice you to fast three days from each month, because you get for each good deed ten times its worth; thus, that would count as fasting the whole time.»

‘Abdullāh said, “But I find in myself the strength to do more.” He (ﷺ) replied:

«فصم صيام نبي الله داودَ ولا تزد عليه: نصف الدهر.»

«Fast then the way that Allāh’s prophet Dāwūd (ﷺ) fasted, and do not add to it: half the time (i.e. every other day).»¹

We have cited additional *ḥadīths* relating to this in the first book of this series.²

1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

2 See “The Quest for Love & Mercy” by the author.

Service and Help

As we will see in the next chapter, it is more of the wife’s than the husband’s responsibility to perform the various chores within the home. However, this does not mean that the man should be absolutely reluctant to extend a helping hand to his wife. To the contrary, helping her is an expression of his love and compassion. A common excuse, “I have no time for that,” is usually a false one. Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) was the busiest of men. He conveyed the Message, led the armies, ruled the Muslims, and took care of all his wives. Furthermore, when he was at home, he would be at the service of his family! Al-Aswad reported that he asked ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها), “What did the Prophet (ﷺ) do at home?” She said:

«كان يكون في مهنة (أو خدمة) أهله. فإذا حضرت الصلاة

خرج إلى الصلاة.»

“He used to be at the service of his family; and when it was time for prayer, he would go out to pray.”¹

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) was also asked, “What did Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) do at home?” She replied:

«كان بشراً من البشر، يفلي ثوبه، ويحلب شاته، ويخدم نفسه.»

“He acted like other men; he would mend his clothes, milk his goat, and serve himself.”²

Discipline

A leader will inevitably have to deal with the “dirty” job of discipline. Discipline is an important process that must be properly implemented. It has its rules and regulations. Violating those rules would undermine

1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī.

2 Recorded by Aḥmad, al-Bukhārī (in *al-Adab ul-Mufrad*), and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 671).

or invalidate the whole process, and may bring about more damage than good.

The man, being the leader of the family, has the obligation of enforcing the “family laws” for the well-being of the family. The rules of discipline between the man and his wife have been set by Allāh (ﷻ) in His Book and in His Messenger’s (ﷺ) *Sunnah*.

In the following, Allāh (ﷻ) mentions four main steps for dealing with rebellious wives:

«وَالَّتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَأَهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَأَضْرِبُوهُنَّ، فَإِنْ أَطَعَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا؛ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا ۝ وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ شِقَاقَ بَيْنِهِمَا فَأَبْعَثُوا حَكَمًا مِنْ أَهْلِهِ وَحَكَمًا مِنْ أَهْلِهَا؛ إِنْ يُرِيدَا إِصْلَاحًا يُوَفِّقِ اللَّهُ بَيْنَهُمَا؛ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا خَبِيرًا ۝» النساء ٣٤-٣٥

«But those women from whom you fear defiance — (first) admonish them; then (if they persist), forsake them in bed; and (finally,) strike them. If they then obey you, seek no means against them. Indeed, Allāh is ever Exalted and Great. And if you fear dissension between the two of them, appoint an arbitrator from his people and an arbitrator from hers. If they both desire reconciliation, Allāh will facilitate it between them. Indeed, Allāh is Knowing and Acquainted.»¹

Abū Bakr Ibn al-‘Arabī (رحمته الله) said:

“Among the best of what I heard in explanation of this *āyah* is the saying of Sa‘īd Bin Jubayr, ‘He (the husband) would admonish her. If she complies (he should stop there), otherwise, he would desert her. If she complies (he should stop there), otherwise, he would hit her. If she complies (he should stop there),

¹ *An-Nisā* 4:34-35.

otherwise, he would seek arbitration, with an arbitrator appointed from each side. They (the arbitrators) would see who is causing the problem; at that point, the marriage could be terminated.”¹

Ibn Kathīr commented on the words, “Exalted and Great” in the first *āyah* (34) saying:

“This carries a strong warning to the men when they transgress over the women without a reason. Indeed, Allāh, the Exalted and Great, is then the women’s protector, and he will surely take revenge against anyone who oppresses them or transgresses over them.”²

ADMONISHMENT

From the above *āyah*, we see that the first step in discipline is admonishment. One may not go to the next step before performing this step. And admonishment should be conducted earnestly, in a manner satisfying the proper etiquettes of commanding the good and forbidding the wrong.

Laqīṭ Bin Ṣabirah (رحمته الله) reported that he said to the Prophet (ﷺ), “O Allāh’s Messenger! I have a wife who has something in her tongue (i.e., she has offensive language).” The Prophet (ﷺ) proposed, «طلقها.» «Divorce her.» He said, “I have children from her, and we have been together for a long time.” He (ﷺ) said:

«مُرْهَا، فَإِنْ يَكُ فِيهَا خَيْرٌ فَسْتَفْعَلْ. وَلَا تَضْرِبْ ظَعِينَتَكَ كَضْرِبِ أَمْتِكَ.»

«Admonish her. If there is good in her, she will obey. And do not hit your wife like you would hit a slave girl.»³

¹ *Ahkām ul-Qur’ān* 1:420.

² *Tafsīr ul-Qur’ān il-‘Aẓīm*.

³ Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Hibbān, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*al-Mishkāt* no. 3260 & *Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi’* no. 5870).

ABANDONMENT

If admonishment fails and the wife persists on her wrong behavior, the husband may go to the next step, which is abandoning her bed. This is a strong disciplinary action that would normally shake the woman's being and make her realize that her husband is willing to forsake her bed and charms because of her rebellious behavior, which is often a sufficient reason for her to take heed and comply.

The Prophet (ﷺ) practiced this form of discipline on some occasions. We will see in our discussion of the Mothers of the Believers that he (ﷺ) once abandoned 'Ā'ishah and Ḥaṣṣah. On another occasion, he abandoned all of his (nine) wives for twenty-nine days because they asked for additional financial support. Allāh (ﷻ) then revealed:

«يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لَأَزْوَاجِكُمْ: "إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُرِيدْنَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا
وَزِينَتَهَا فَتَعَالَيْنَ أُمَتِّعْكُنَّ وَأُسَرِّحْكُنَّ سَرَاحًا جَمِيلًا ۖ وَإِنْ
كُنْتُمْ تُرِيدْنَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالْآخِرَةَ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ أَعَدَّ
لِلْمُحْسِنَاتِ مِنْكُنَّ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا." ﴿٢٨﴾ الأَحْزَابُ ٢٩-٢٨

«O Prophet! Say to your wives, "If you should desire the worldly life and its adornment, then come, I will provide for you and give you a gracious release. But if you should desire Allāh and His Messenger and the home of the Hereafter — then indeed, Allāh has prepared for the doers of good among you a great reward.»¹

PERMISSION OF HITTING

As we have seen in the above *āyah* of *Sūrat un-Nisā'* (4:34), if the first two steps do not work with the wife and she continues to be disobedient and rebellious, the husband may resort to hitting her.

However, hitting has restrictions: it should not be painful, should

¹ Al-Aḥzāb 33:28-29.

not leave marks on the body, and should avoid the face, head, and abdomen. 'Amr Bin al-Aḥwaṣ al-Jushamī (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«أَلَا وَاسْتَوْصُوا بِالنِّسَاءِ خَيْرًا، فَإِنَّهُنَّ عَوَانٌ عِنْدَكُمْ، لَيْسَ تَمْلِكُونَ
مِنْهُنَّ شَيْئًا غَيْرَ ذَلِكَ، إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مَبِينَةٍ. فَإِنْ فَعَلْنَ
فَأَهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ، وَأَضْرِبُوهُنَّ ضَرْبًا غَيْرَ مُبْرِحٍ، فَإِنْ أَطَعْنَكُمْ
فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا.»

«Lo! Take good care of the women, for they surely are captives under you, and you do not possess of them any more than that — unless they commit a manifest sin; if they do that, abandon them in sleep, and beat them lightly; if they obey you then do not ill-treat them any further.»¹

'Aṭā' (رضي الله عنه) reported that he asked Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه), "What is 'light hitting'?" He replied, "It is to hit with a *siwāk*² stick or something like it."³

One might ask, "What is the benefit of light hitting?" The answer is that a woman normally has a sensitive nature; the slightest show of discourtesy to her would tremendously affect her and cause her to rethink her actions. If, on the other hand, light hitting does not work with her, brutal hitting won't.

We should keep in mind that the purpose of hitting is to correct and remind, and not to avenge or harm.

DISAPPROVAL OF HITTING

Even though a man is allowed to hit his wife in certain situations,

¹ Recorded by at-Tirmithī, an-Nasā'ī, and Ibn Mājah. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 7880 & *Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 2030).

² *Siwāk* or *miswāk* A thin and short stick (usually about 6 inches or 20 cm long), cut from the roots of a desert tree called *arāk*, and used to clean the teeth.

³ Al-Qurṭubī's "Al-Jāmi' li-Aḥkām il-Qur'ān" 5:172.

hitting her is disliked in *Islām* and is considered the resort of the helpless. Iyās Bin ‘Abdillāh ad-Dawsī (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

« لا تضربوا إماء الله. »

«Do not hit Allāh’s female slaves (i.e., the women)»

Later on, ‘Umar came to the Prophet (ﷺ) saying, “The women have rebelled against their husbands.” So he (ﷺ) gave the men permission to hit them. On the following day, many women came to Allāh’s Messenger’s (ﷺ) houses (i.e., his wives’) complaining. So he addressed the people saying:

«لقد طاف الليلة بآل محمد نساء كثير (سبعون امرأة)، كلهن تشكو زوجها من الضرب، وأيم الله لا تجدون أولئك خياركم.»

«Indeed, a large number of (or seventy) women have come to the houses of Muḥammad’s families, all of them complaining that their husbands beat them. By Allāh, you will not find that those (who hit their wives) are the best among you.»¹

Our example, Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ), never hit any of his wives. ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported:

«ما ضرب رسول الله بيده امرأة قط، ولا خادماً، ولا ضرب شيئاً، إلا أن يجاهد في سبيل الله.»

“Never did Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) hit with his hand a women, a servant, or anyone else — except during *jihād* (fighting) for Allāh’s cause.”²

It is inconceivable how a man could harshly hit his wife and then

¹ Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, Ibn an-Nasā’ī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi’* no. 5137).

² Recorded by Muslim and others.

expect her to render intimate pleasures to him! ‘Abdullāh Bin Zam’ah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«يعد أحدكم فيجلد امرأته جلد البعير، ولعله يضاجعها في آخر يومه.»

«(How could) one of you turn to his wife and whip her like whipping a camel and then make love to her at the end of the day!?»¹

Many husbands are abusive to their wives, justifying their action by the texts that command the wife to obey the husband or that allow him to discipline her. Those husbands must understand that discipline is a well-regulated matter in *Islām*, and has no room for abuse. An abusive husband is indeed an oppressor, and what we have mentioned regarding oppressors applies to him. Furthermore, an abused wife has the full right to turn to justice and seek punishment of her abusive husband.

DIVORCE

We have seen above that the last step in the discipline process is arbitration. If that does not work, nothing would be left but divorce — similar to the saying, “The last form of treatment is ironing.”

Divorce is a right for the husband. But it is his obligation to apply it in the right measure and when the necessity arises. Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) had nine wives at one time. Yet, we know of only one case where he used this “privilege”.²

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

² See the biography of Ḥafṣah later in this book.

CHAPTER 3

THE WIFE'S OBLIGATIONS TOWARD HER HUSBAND

The Great Right of the Husband

THE MAN'S DEGREE OVER THE WOMAN

Allāh (ﷻ) has appointed the man as the usual head of the family:

«الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ
وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ. فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ
بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ. وَالَّتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَأَهْجُرُوهُنَّ
فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاضْرِبُوهُنَّ، فَإِنْ أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ
سَبِيلًا. إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٣٤﴾ النساء ٣٤

«Men are in charge of women by (right of) what (qualities) Allāh has given one over the other and what they spend (in support) from their wealth. So, righteous women are devoutly obedient (to Allāh), guarding in (their husband's) absence what Allāh commands them to guard (their husband's honor, property, secrets, etc.) But those women from whom you fear defiance — first admonish them; then (if they persist), forsake them in bed; and (as a last resort,) strike them. But if they obey you, seek no means against them. Indeed, Allāh is ever Exalted and Great.»¹

¹ An-Nisā' 4:34.

Ibn Kathīr (رحمه الله) commented on this, "The man is the woman's custodian; he is her supervisor, chief, leader, and the one who corrects her if she deviates."

That gives the man a major responsibility in running the family, and qualifies him for a number of rights. Those rights are to be rendered to him by the other family members and, above all, his wife. This is the "degree" or "edge" that Allāh awarded to the man over the woman. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ، وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ
دَرَجَةٌ. وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٨﴾ البقرة ٢٢٨

«And due to them (the wives) is similar to what is expected of them, according to what is reasonable. But the men have a degree over them (in responsibility and authority). Allāh is Mighty and Wise.»¹

It must be understood that this degree is a degree of responsibility before being a degree of homage. The man earns it by being truly worthy of the trust that Allāh (ﷻ) conferred on him, and loses it by neglecting that trust.

SUBMISSION TO THE HUSBAND'S AUTHORITY

As we discussed above, Allāh (ﷻ) has divided the responsibilities and duties within the family, and has set the man as the one in authority. The woman should not reject or challenge that authority. Rather, she should accept it in fulfillment of Allāh's commands. She should view her submission to her husband's authority as a submission to Allāh's decree. This submission should almost reach the degree of prostrating to her husband. 'Ā'ishah, Abū Hurayrah, Mu'āth, and Buraydah (رضي الله عنهم) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«لو كنت امرأةً أحداً أن يسجد لأحدٍ لأمرت المرأة أن تسجد لزوجها.»

¹ Al-Baqarah 2:228.

«Were I to order a person to prostrate before another person, I would have ordered the woman to prostrate before her husband.»¹

As stated above, a woman's obedience to her husband is part of her obedience to Allāh (ﷻ). Therefore, giving him his rights is part of fulfilling Allāh's rights. 'Abdullāh Bin Abī Awfā reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«لو كنت امرأةً أحداً أن يسجد لغير الله لأمرت المرأة أن تسجد لزوجها. والذي نفس محمد بيده، لا تؤدي المرأة حق ربها حتى تؤدي حق زوجها كله، حتى لو سألها نفسها وهي على قتب لم تمنعه.»

«Were I to command a person to prostrate to other than Allāh, I would have commanded the woman to prostrate to her husband. By the One in Whose hand is Muḥammad's soul, a woman would not fulfill her Lord's right until she had completely fulfilled her husband's right — even if he were to ask her for herself while she is riding on a camel, she should not refuse.»²

ABSOLUTE WILLINGNESS TO SERVE AND COOPERATE

The woman should demonstrate her acceptance of her husband's authority by showing willingness to serve him to her best ability. Mu'āth Bin Jabal (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«لو تعلم المرأة حق الزوج لم تقعد ما حضر غداؤه وعشاؤه حتى يفرغ منه.»

«If a woman knew her husband's right, she would

¹ Recorded by at-Tirmithī, Aḥmad, al-Ḥākim, and Ibn Mājah. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 1998 and *Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 5239, 5294).

² Recorded by Aḥmad, Ibn Mājah, and Ibn Ḥibbān. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 1998 and *Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 5295).

not sit while he is eating his dinner or supper until he finishes eating.>¹

The Prophet (ﷺ) expresses the woman's absolute submission to her husband's authority in a *ḥadīth* that may appear repulsive to some. Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«حق الزوج على زوجته أن لو كانت به قرحة فلحسنتها ما أدت حقه.»

«A husband's right upon his wife is such that if he had an ulcer and she licked it for him, she would not fulfill his right by that.>²

Similarly, Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«لا يصلح لبشر أن يسجد لبشر. ولو صلح أن يسجد بشر لبشر،
لأمرت المرأة أن تسجد لزوجها من عظم حقه عليها. والذي نفسي
بيده، لو أن من قدمه إلى مفرق رأسه قرحة تنبجس بالقيح
والصديد، ثم أقبلت تلحسه، ما أدت حقه.»

«It is not permissible for a human being to prostrate to another human being. Were it permissible for a human being to prostrate to another human being, I would have commanded the woman to prostrate to her husband because of his great right upon her. By the One in Whose hand is my soul, if he (the husband) had, from his feet to the top of his head, an ulcer oozing blood and pus, and she came to lick it off for him, she would not have fulfilled his right.>³

1 Recorded by at-Ṭabarānī and al-Bazzār. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 5259).

2 Recorded by al-Ḥākim, Ibn Ḥibbān, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 3148).

3 Recorded by Aḥmad and an-Nasā'ī. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī

This description emphasizes the great right of the husband upon his wife; only if she were able to do for him such a repugnant act as is described here would she be in position to fulfill his rights. In other words: most women cannot normally fulfill their husband's rights.

IS THE HUSBAND BETTER?

One may wonder, "What is so great about the husband that the woman is required to perform heroic or impossible acts to please him?" In answering this question, we have to understand the following principles:

1. The rights granted to the husband are necessary for the peaceful and productive running of the family.
2. The above *ḥadīths* refer to a man who fulfills all of his responsibilities as husband and family-head. He constantly offers to his wife and children guidance, protection, support, nurturing, and so on. Neglecting any of that would proportionally reduce his rights upon his wife.
3. When the husband fulfills his responsibilities toward his wife as outlined above, he becomes a true benefactor who deserves her full gratitude and support.

Therefore, the husband's rights do not necessarily mean that he is better than the wife. He is of no higher status or better species. Both of them descend from Ādam (عليه السلام), and Ādam was made from dirt. Piety and righteousness are what determines who is truly better than the other. His rights are set by Allāh to guarantee the well-being and success of their relationship and their family. Even though the wife is normally subordinate to her husband in the family structure, she may be far better than him in Allāh's sight, especially when she fulfills her obligations in a way that is pleasing to Allāh (ﷻ).

(*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 7725).

Kindness Toward the Husband

Part of a woman's fulfillment of her husband's rights is to treat him in a good and honorable way, and to avoid harming him.

SHOWING GRATITUDE

As we have discussed above, the husband normally has many favors upon his wife. Those favors are not limited to the financial privilege which, even though is usually true, is not always the case. A woman should show gratitude to her husband, and should return his favors in the form of kindness and good treatment.

A great example is Khadījah (رضي الله عنها), who was wealthier than the Prophet (ﷺ). Her financial advantage, though, did not make her arrogant or ungrateful to her husband. Rather, she was a great example of modesty and kindness that the Prophet (ﷺ) continued to remember all his life.

A woman who is reluctant to admit her husband's favors displeases her Lord (ﷻ), even before she displeases her husband. 'Abdullāh Bin 'Amr (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

« لا ينظرُ اللهُ إلى امرأةٍ لا تشكرُ لزوجها، وهي لا تستغني عنه. »

«Allāh does not look (with mercy) at a woman who is not grateful to her husband when she cannot live without him.»¹

Asmā' Bint Zayd (رضي الله عنها) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) passed by her while she was with other young girls of her age. He addressed them saying, «إياكن وكفر المُنعمين» **Avoid the ingratitude of those who have been favored.** She asked him, "O Allāh's Messenger! What is the ingratitude of those who have been favored?" He (ﷺ) explained:

«لعل إحداكن تطول أيمتها من أبيها، ثم يرزقها الله زوجاً

¹ Recorded by an-Nasā'ī (in *al-Kubrā*) and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 289).

صالحاً، ويرزقها منه ولداً، فتغضب الغضبة فتكفر، فتقول:

«ما رأيتُ منك خيراً قط.»

«One of you might stay with her parents for a long time (before marriage). Allāh would then grant her a righteous husband, and grant her children from him. She would then get angry for some reason and turn ungrateful, saying to him, "I have never seen any good from you."»¹

'Abdullāh Bin 'Umar, Abū Hurayrah, and Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said to the women:

«يا معشرَ النساءِ! تصدقن وأكثرن من الاستغفار، فإني رأيتكن أكثر أهل النار: إنكن تُكثرن اللعن، وتكفرن العشير. ما رأيت من ناقصات عقل ودين أغلبَ لدي لب منكن. أما نقصان العقل، فشهادة امرأتين بشهادة رجل؛ وأما نقصان الدين، فتمكث أياماً لا تُصلي، وتُفطر في رمضان.»

«O women! Give charity and ask for Allāh's forgiveness abundantly, for I have seen you (women) to be the majority of the Fire's people. (That is because) you frequently curse, and you are ungrateful to your husbands.

I have not seen ones with incomplete intellect and religion who are more overpowering to a man of reason than you are!

As for incomplete intellect: it is that two women's testimonies equate one man's. And as for incomplete religion: it is that she stays for a number of days without prayer, and she breaks her fast during

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (in *al-Adab ul-Mufrad*), Aḥmad, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 823).

Ramadhān.¹

THE WOMAN'S MENTAL AND RELIGIOUS DEFICIENCIES

It is important to note the following in regard to the above *ḥadīth*:

1. Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) described the woman as being mentally deficient in comparison with the man. This should not be taken out of context. Her deficiency is derived from the fact that Allāh (ﷻ) requires two female witnesses in the place of one male, so that one of them would possibly remind the other if she forgets². This "forgetting" is caused by the woman usually being more emotional than the man, and more involved in the household affairs and less in the affairs of the outside world. Thus, the Prophet's (ﷺ) statement is an expression of a clear difference between the man's and woman's natures. It is brought to emphasize that, even though she is considered more emotional and less "intellectual", and he is considered less emotional and more "intellectual", she still can defeat him in his own arena!
2. Similarly, the woman's description of being religiously deficient is explained by that she does not pray or fast during her menses. Thus, it is again to indicate that, even though the man is supposedly in a stronger position of being religious because he prays and fasts more, the woman still overpowers him!

KINDNESS TO THE HUSBAND IS AN ACT OF WORSHIP

The woman's treatment of her husband could be her passport to *Jannah* (or to the hellfire).

Ḥuṣayn Bin Miḥṣan (رضي الله عنه) reported that one of his paternal aunts visited the Prophet (ﷺ). He asked her, «أبي هذا أذات بعلي؟» «O Woman, do you have a husband?» She replied, "Yes." He asked, «كيف أنتِ له؟» «How do you treat him?» She replied, "As much as I can, I do not deny him any request." He (ﷺ) said:

1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

2 See *al-Baqarah* 2:282.

«فَأَنْظِرِي أَيْنَ أَنْتِ مِنْهُ، فَإِنَّمَا هُوَ جَنَّتُكَ وَنَارُكَ.»

«Check then what is your position with him, because he is either your (way to) *Jannah* or Fire.»¹

THE BEST OF WOMEN

The best of women is that who is good and kind to her husband. Abū Uṭhaynah aṣ-Ṣadaḥī (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«خَيْرُ نِسَائِكُمُ الْوَلُودُ الْوَدُودُ، الْمُوَاسِيَةُ الْمُوَاتِيَةُ، إِذَا اتَّقَيْنَ اللَّهَ. وَشَرُّ نِسَائِكُمُ الْمُتَبَرِّجَاتُ الْمُتَخَيَّلَاتُ، وَهِنَّ الْمُنَافِقَاتُ. لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مِنْهُنَّ إِلَّا مِثْلُ الْغَرَابِ الْأَعْصَمِ.»

«The best of your women are those who are bearers of many children, loving (to their husbands), comforting, and tolerant — provided that they have *taqwā* of Allāh.

And the worst of your women are those who display their charms and swagger in their walk — those are hypocrites indeed. None of them (the women) will enter *Jannah* except (as rarely) as are the crows that have red beaks and legs.»²

Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«أَلَا أَخْبِرُكُمْ بِرِجَالِكُم مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ؟ النَّبِيُّ فِي الْجَنَّةِ، وَالصَّادِقُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ، وَالشَّهِيدُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ، وَالْمَوْلُودُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ، وَالرَّجُلُ يَزُورُ أَخَاهُ

1 Recorded by Aḥmad, al-Ḥākim, and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 1509).

2 Recorded by al-Bayhaqī (in *as-Sunan*) and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 3330 & *as-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1849). The last part of it (about the crow) is also recorded by Aḥmad and others from 'Amr Bin al-'Ās (رضي الله عنه) and verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*as-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1850).

في ناحية مصر، لا يزوره إلا لله عز وجل. ونساؤكم من أهل الجنة:

الودودُ الولودُ العودُ على زوجها، التي إذا غضب جاءت حتى

تضع يدها في يده وتقول: "لا أذوق غمضاً حتى ترضى."»

«Should I not tell you of your men who will be of the people of *Jannah*? The prophets will be in *Jannah*; the *ṣiddīqs* (most truthful) will be in *Jannah*; the *shahīds* (martyrs) will be in *Jannah*; a baby (dying before puberty) will be in *Jannah*; and a man who visits his brother in a distant locality, visiting him only for the sake of Allāh (ﷻ).»

And as for your women who will be of the people of *Jannah*: she is the loving, bearer of many children, the one who is caring toward her husband — the one who, when he gets angry, comes until she puts her hand in his and says, "I will not taste any sleep until you are happy."»¹

PROHIBITION OF HARMING THE HUSBAND

A woman who harms her husband receives curses from the women of *Jannah*. That is an indication of Allāh's displeasure with her.

Mu'ath Bin Jabal (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«لا تؤذي امرأة زوجها في الدنيا إلا قالت زوجته من الحور العين:

لا تؤذيه قاتلك الله، فإنما هو عندك دخیلٌ يوشك أن يفارقك إلينا.»

«If a woman harms (in any way) her husband, then his wife in Paradise tells her: "Do not harm him, may Allāh fight you, he is only staying temporarily with you. Soon he will come to us."»²

1 Recorded by Tammām ar-Rāzī, Ibn 'Asākir, and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 287).

2 Recorded by Ahmad, at-Tirmithī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 7192 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 173).

Obeying the Husband

Indeed, obeying the husband is an obligation on the women in *Islām*; it is an act of worship that she presents to Allāh (ﷻ) alone, only seeking his pleasure and acceptance. We have seen numerous texts instructing the woman to obey her husband and cooperate well with him in maintaining the family. There are other texts that are even more explicit in this regard.

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إذا صلت المرأة خمسها، وصامت شهرها، وحصنت فرجها،

وأطاعت زوجها، قيل لها: ادخلي الجنة من أي أبواب الجنة شئت.»

«When a woman prays her five (prayers), fasts her month (*Ramaḍān*), preserves her chastity, and obeys her husband, she will be told (on the Day of Judgment), "Enter *Jannah* from any of its (eight) gates."»¹

Similarly, Anas, 'Abd ur-Raḥmān az-Zuhrī, and others (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إذا صلت المرأة خمسها، وصامت شهرها، وحفظت فرجها،

وأطاعت زوجها، دخلت الجنة.»

«When a woman prays her five (prayers), fasts her month (*Ramaḍān*), preserves her chastity, and obeys her husband, she will enter *Jannah*.»²

On the other hand, disobeying the husband is a great sin that could cause the prayers to be unacceptable by Allāh. Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) reported

1 Recorded by Ibn Hibbān. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 660 and *Ādāb uz-Zafāf* p. 286).

2 Recorded by al-Bazzār, Ahmad, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 661 and *Ādāb uz-Zafāf* p. 286).

that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«اثنان لا تُجاوزُ صلاتُهما رؤوسَهُما: عبدٌ آبقٌ من مَوالِيهِ حتى يرجع،
وأمرأةٌ عصت زوجها حتى ترجع.»

«There are two individuals whose prayer does not rise above their heads: a slave running away from his masters — until he returns to them, and a woman who disobeys her husband — until she returns (to obedience).»¹

SERVING THE HUSBAND

Part of a wife's obedience to her husband is to serve him to her best ability. That includes performing the daily chores, serving his food, and so on. We again cite the *ḥadīth* reported by Mu'āth Bin Jabal (رضي الله عنه) that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«لو تعلم المرأة حق الزوج لم تقعد ما حضرَ غداؤه وعشاؤه حتى يفرغ منه.»

«If a woman knew her husband's right, she would not sit while he is eating his dinner or supper until he finishes eating.»²

No woman is exempt from this responsibility — unless her husband elects to relieve her. Even a woman as noble as the Prophet's (ﷺ) daughter found herself responsible for that.

'Alī (رضي الله عنه) reported that his wife Fāṭimah (رضي الله عنها), the Prophet's (ﷺ) daughter, went to the Prophet (ﷺ) complaining about the bad effect of the stone hand-mill on her hand. She did not find him, and left him a message with 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) asking him to give her a maid from among the captives that he had recently received. When 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) told him of his daughter's need, he went to her house, entered, and

1 Recorded by al-Ḥākim and at-Ṭabarānī. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 136 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 288).

2 Recorded by at-Ṭabarānī and al-Bazzār. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 5259).

found her and 'Alī in bed ready to go to sleep. Fāṭimah started to rise, but he (ﷺ) told her to stay in bed. He sat between them and said:

«ألا أدلكما على خير مما سألتما؟ إذا أخذتما مضاجعكما
فسبّحَا ثلاثاً وثلاثين، وأحمداً ثلاثاً وثلاثين، وكبراً أربعاً
وثلاثين، فإن ذلك خير لكما من خادم.»

«Shall I not direct you to something better than what you have requested? When you go to bed say, “*Subḥan Allāh* — exalted is Allāh,” thirty-three times, “*Al-ḥamdu lillāh* — all praise belongs to Allāh,” thirty-three times, and, “*Allāhu Akbar* — Allāh is the Greatest,” thirty four times. Indeed, that is better for you than a servant.»¹

Ibn Qayyim noted, “The wife's serving of her husband is a matter about which there is no doubt. It is not correct to differentiate in that regard between a noble and a low class woman, nor between a poor and a rich one. The most noble of all women (Fāṭimah) used to serve her husband. She came complaining to her father (ﷺ) about the hardship she was facing in that regard, but he did not grant her her wish.”²

GUIDELINES FOR OBEDIENCE

There are some important guidelines that must be emphasized in regard to the subject of obedience. The following has mostly been presented in the previous sections or chapters, but we include it here for easy reference.

1. A woman's obedience to her husband is an obedience to Allāh (ﷻ) in the first place, because He ordered it.
2. The women should obey her husband as long as obeying him is

1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

2 *Zād ul-Ma'ād* 5:160.

within her capacity.

3. The husband should only be obeyed in matters that do not involve disobeying Allāh (ﷻ).

Doing Things That Please Her Husband

Part of her kindness toward her husband, the woman should do her best to please him — making sure that what she does is not displeasing to Allāh (ﷻ).

PLEASING HIM WITH HER APPEARANCE

A good woman attempts to please her husband with her appearance. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«خير النساء التي تسره إذا نظر، وتطيعه إذا أمر،

ولا تخالفه في نفسها ولا مالها بما يكره.»

«The best of women is that who pleases him (i.e. her husband) when he looks at her, obeys him when he orders, and does not subject her person or money to what he dislikes.»¹

Similarly, ‘Abdullāh Bin Salām (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) was asked, “Who are the best of women?” He replied:

«خير النساء من تسرك إذا أبصرت، وتطيعك إذا أمرت،

وتحفظ غيبتك في نفسها ومالك.»

«The best of women is that who pleases you when you look at her, obeys you when you order her, and safeguards you during your absence in regard to

¹ Recorded by Aḥmad, an-Nasā’ī, and al-Ḥākim. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi’* no. 3298 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1838).

herself and your wealth.»¹

It is important to emphasize here that “pleasing” the husband is the *Shar’i* pleasing. Thus, she would not appear to him or act in a way displeasing to Allāh. That does not bring any real or lasting pleasure. And the highest form of “pleasing” is realized by her being a model practicing Muslim woman: her *hijāb*, modesty, and virtue would all bring great joy and pleasure into a true believer’s heart and soul.

ADMITTING PEOPLE ONLY WITH HIS PERMISSION

A woman should not allow anyone into her husband’s house without his consent. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«لا يحل لامرأة أن تصوم وزوجها شاهد إلا بإذنه، إلا رمضان.

ولا تأذن في بيته إلا بإذنه.»

«It is not permissible for a woman to fast, while her husband is present, without his permission — except for *Ramaḍān*. Nor is it permissible for her to admit anyone to his house except with his permission.»²

The husband’s consent could be implicit. For instance, if a woman is certain that her husband does not object to some of the neighboring women visiting her, she does not have to ask him for a specific permission every time one of them comes to visit her.

AVOIDING ASKING FOR DIVORCE WITHOUT REASON

A righteous woman would not ask her husband for divorce without a good reason. Only if she finds that he is causing her a real harm in her faith or well-being would she be justified to seek divorce. The

¹ Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarānī (in *al-Kabīr*) and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi’* no. 3299 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1838).

² Recorded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

Prophet (ﷺ) warned that the women who ask for divorce without a sound reason would be liable to punishment, and may not enter into *Jannah*. Thawbān (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«أيما امرأة سألت زوجها الطلاق من غير بأس، فحرام عليها رائحة الجنة.»

«Any woman who asks her husband for divorce without a (good) reason, the fragrance of *Jannah* will be prohibited for her.»¹

Asking the husband for divorce demonstrates ungratefulness, and undermines the husband's authority and efforts toward his wife. It is a blow in his face that is not allowed in *Islām* without a valid excuse.

A MOTHER'S ADVICE TO HER DAUGHTER

The following is an advice from a *Jāhilī* mother to her daughter on her wedding day. It reflects a great and mature experience, and concisely puts in a nutshell the most important actions that a woman should consider in order to please her husband.

Umm Ayās Bint 'Awf Bin Muslim ash-Shaybānī was given in marriage to 'Amr Bin Hījr, the king of Kindah². Shortly before her wedding, her mother Umāmah Bint al-Hārith took her aside and told her:

"O my daughter! If the advice were to be left off the virtuous and well-mannered, you would be in no need of advice. However, the advice reminds the forgetful and guides the wise. And if a woman were to forsake marriage because of her parents' wealth or their fondness of her, you would be in least need for marriage. However, the women have been made for the men, and for them were the men made.

O my daughter! You are now departing from the

¹ Recorded by Ahmad, Abū Dāwūd, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 2706 & *Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 2035).

² A Yamanī Tribe.

climate where you lived, and the nest where you grew, to an unfamiliar domicile and companion. By virtue of you husband's custody, he is now an watcher and master over you. So be a maid to him, and he will surely be your servant. Be his earth (in submission), and he will be your sky (in protection). And preserve for him ten qualities, and they will be a treasure for you:

1. Submit to him by showing contentment (in regard to what he gives you).
2. Listen to him and obey him in the best manner.
3. Guard where his eye looks, so that it will not fall on anything ugly from you.
4. Guard what his nose smells, so that he will not smell from you but the best aroma.
5. Respect his meal times, for the attack of hunger is a cause for rage.
6. Respect his sleep times, for the disturbance of sleep is a cause of annoyance.
7. Safeguard his wealth by employing good judgment.
8. Care for his children and servants by employing good planning.
9. Do not disobey any of his commands, for if you do, you would bring resentment into his breast.
10. Do not disclose any of his secrets, for if you do, you would not be secure from his revenge.

Furthermore, do not display joy when he is worried, nor sadness when he is happy, for this will breed hatred. And remember, my daughter, that the more you please him, the more he honors you. And remember that you will not attain what you desire from him unless you give preference to his likes over yours."¹

¹ Recorded in *al-Aghānī* by al-Aṣbahānī (*Tuḥfat ul-'Arūs* p. 91-92).

Fulfilling the Husband's Physical Desire

A MAJOR OBLIGATION

We have discussed earlier that chastity is a main objective of marriage. A man preserves his chastity by turning his lust toward his wife instead of directing it toward prohibited outlets. It is therefore a great obligation upon the wife to be always available for the consummation of her husband's desire; and it is a major sin for her to deny her husband the intimate pleasure that he seeks with her.

'Abdullāh Bin Abī Awfā (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«والذي نفس محمد بيده، لا تؤذي المرأة حق ربها حتى تؤذي حق زوجها كله، حتى لو سألها نفسها وهي على قصب لم تمنعه نفسها.»

«By the One that Muḥammad's soul is in His hand, a woman would not truly fulfill the right of her Lord (Allāh) until she fulfills all of her husband's right — even if he were to ask her for herself while she is in a camel's saddle, she should not deny him of that.»¹

From the above *ḥadīth*, we see that the wife should not hesitate in answering her husband's call, even if that would cause an inconvenience. Similarly, Zayd Bin Arqam (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إذا دعا الرجل امرأته إلى فراشه فلتجب، وإن كانت على ظهر قصب.»

«When a man invites his wife for his bed, she should respond to him, even if she was sitting in a camel's saddle.»²

¹ Recorded by Aḥmad, Ibn Mājah, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ādāb uz-Zifāf* p. 84).

² Recorded by al-Bazzār and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*as-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1203 & *Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 533).

Talq Bin 'Alī (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إذا دعا الرجل زوجته لحاجته فلتأته، وإن كانت على التنور.»

«When a man invites his wife for his (sexual) need, she should go to him, even if she was working at the outdoor oven.»¹

DENIAL OF INTIMATE PLEASURE IS A MAJOR SIN

Being a major obligation upon the wife to fulfill her husband's desire, refusing to do that is a major sin that deserves the angels' curse and Allāh's wrath.

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إذا دعا الرجل امرأته إلى فراشه، فأبت (فلم تأته)، فبات غضبان عليها، لعنتها الملائكة حتى تصبح (أو يرضى عنها).»

«If a man invites his wife to bed and she refuses to come and he sleeps while angry, the angels curse her till the morning.»²

«If a man invites his wife to bed and she refuses to come and he sleeps while angry, the angels curse her till the morning.»²

In another report, Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إذا باتت المرأة هاجرة فراش زوجها لعنتها الملائكة حتى تصبح.»

«When a woman deserts her husband's bed at night, the angels curse her until the morning.»³

Also, Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

¹ Recorded by Aḥmad, an-Nasā'ī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*as-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1202 & *Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 534).

² Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

«والذي نفسي بيده، ما من رجل يدعو امرأته إلى فراشه، فتأبى

عليه، إلا كان الذي في السماء ساخطاً عليها حتى يرضى عنها.»

«By the One in Whose hand is my soul, never would a man invite his wife to his bed and she refuses but the One Who is above the heavens would be angry with her until he (her husband) is pleased with her.»¹

Abū Umāmah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«ثلاثة لا تجاوز صلاتهم آذانهم: العبد الأبق حتى يرجع،

وأمرأة باتت وزوجها عليها ساخط، وإمام قوم وهم له كارهون.»

«There are three individuals whose prayers do not rise above their ears (i.e., is not accepted): a fleeing slave until he returns (to his master), a woman who spends the night while her husband is angry with her, and a man who leads some people and they dislike him.»²

NO VOLUNTARY FASTING WITHOUT HIS PERMISSION

Since the wife should be ready and willing to fulfill her husband's desire at all times, she is not allowed to fast voluntarily without his permission. The reason for this prohibition is that her "voluntary" fasting could interfere with her "obligatory" fulfillment of his desire.

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«لا تصم المرأة وبعلمها شاهد إلا بإذنه، غير رمضان؛ ولا تأذن

في بيته وهو شاهد إلا بإذنه؛ وما أنفقت من كسبه من غير

¹ Recorded by Muslim.

² Recorded by at-Tirmithī. Verified to be *hasan* by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 3057).

أمره فإن نصف أجره له.»

«A woman may not fast, while her husband is present, except with his permission — except for *Ramaḍān*; and she may not admit anyone into his house, while he is present, except with his permission; and whatever she spends of his earning, without his permission, he will surely get half of the reward.»¹

MODERATENESS IN WORSHIP

Similar to fasting, the woman should avoid excessiveness in performing her acts of worship, because that could also interfere with her obligation toward her husband.

Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) reported that the wife of Ṣafwān Bin al-Mu'aṭṭil came to Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) while Ṣafwān and others of the *ṣaḥābah* were with him. She said, "O Allāh's Messenger! My husband Ṣafwān Bin al-Mu'aṭṭil hits me when I pray, forces me to eat when I fast, and he does not pray the *fajr* prayer until the sun rises." The Messenger (ﷺ) asked Ṣafwān about her claims, and he replied, "O Allāh's Messenger! As for saying that I hit her when she prays, it is because she reads two *sūrah*s (after *al-Fātiḥah*), causing me inconvenience — even though I told her not to do that." Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«لو كانت سورة لكفت الناس.»

«If only one *Sūrah* is recited, it would suffice the people.»

Ṣafwān continued, "As for saying that I force her to break her fast, it is because she frequently fasts (voluntary fasting) — when I am a young man and cannot endure that (because of my desire)." Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

« لا تصومن امرأة إلا بإذن زوجها. »

«A woman may not fast without her husband's permission.»

Ṣafwān continued, "As for her saying that I do not pray until the sun rises, it is because we are from a family that is known to be like that (heavy sleepers). We cannot wake up until it is close to sunrise." Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

« فإذا استيقظت فصلّ. »

«So when you wake up, pray.»¹

Avoiding Suspicious Situations with Other Men

The married life is based on trust. Depending on her conduct, the wife can be a source of honor or depravity for the whole family. In order to maintain her husband's trust and safeguard his honor, she must avoid all situations that may cause suspicion to him or to other people.

AVOIDING DISPLAYING HER CHARMS TO OTHER MEN

A woman should be modest and plain in her appearance, avoiding everything that could attract the men's eyes or give them evil thoughts.

Fuḍālah Bin 'Ubayd (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

« ثلاثة لا تسأل عنهم: رجل فارق الجماعة وعصى إمامه ومات عاصياً، وأمة أو عبدٌ أبق من سيده فمات، وأمرأة غاب عنها زوجها وقد كفاها مؤنة الدنيا فتبرجت بعده؛ فلا تسأل عنهم. »

«There are three (types of) individuals that you need

¹ Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, Aḥmad, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 395 & 2172, and *Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 2004).

not ask about (because they are doomed): a man who departs from the *Jamā'ah*, disobeys his *imām* (ruler), and dies in a state of disobedience; a female or male slave who runs away from his master and dies in that (fugitive) state; and a woman that, when her husband is absent — even though he had sufficed her from all worldly worries — she adorns herself in his absence (to other men). So, you need not ask about those.»¹

AVOIDING UNNECESSARY TALK WITH OTHER MEN

A woman should not talk to the men without her husband's permission (whether explicit or implicit). Even then, her talking with other men should be limited, formal, and to the point.

'Amr Bin al-'Aṣ (رضي الله عنه) reported:

« نهى أن تُكلم النساء إلا بإذن أزواجهن. »

"The Prophet (ﷺ) prohibited speaking to woman without their husbands' permission." ²

AVOIDING PRIVACY WITH OTHER MEN

The woman may not be alone in a private place with a man who is neither her husband nor her *maḥram*.

Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

« لا يدخلن رجل بعد يومي هذا على مُعَيَّبَةٍ إلا ومعه رجلٌ أو اثنان. »

«Let no man enter, after this day, to the privacy of a woman unless he has with him one or two other

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*) and al-Hākim. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 3058 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 542).

² Recorded by at-Ṭabarānī (in *al-Kabīr*). Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 6813 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 652).

men.>¹

Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

« لا تسافر المرأة إلا مع ذي محرم، ولا يدخل عليها رجل إلا معها محرم. »

«A woman may not travel except with a *maḥram*.
And no (unrelated) man may come into her presence
unless she has a *maḥram* with her.»²

AVOIDING TRAVELLING WITHOUT MAHRAMS

A woman may not travel without a *maḥram*. Travel is a state in which a person is weaker and more liable to attacks or temptations. Even in today's modernized travel, a woman must have a man with her to protect and help her.

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

« لا يحل لامرأة أن تسافر إلا ومعها ذو محرم منها. »

«It is not permissible for a woman to travel except in
the company of a *maḥram*.»³

And Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

« لا تسافر المرأة بريداً إلا ومعها محرم يحرم عليها. »

«It is not permissible for a woman to travel the
distance of a *barīd* (one mailing station)⁴ except in
the company of a *maḥram* who is prohibited for her
(to marry).»⁵

1 Recorded by Muslim and Aḥmad.

2 Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

3 Recorded by Muslim.

4 Ibn Khuzaymah defined this as 12 Hāshimī miles. Each Hāshimī mile is 4000 arm spans (60 cm), or 2.4 km, or 1.5 mi. Thus, a *barīd* is less than 20 miles.

5 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, al-Ḥākim, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 7302 & *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 2421).

AVOIDING UNDRESSING OUTSIDE HER HOME

A woman should not undress outside her home. Some women had the practice of undressing and taking a bath in public facilities for females. The Prophet (ﷺ) prohibited that and indicated that a woman who does it would not deserve Allāh's cover and protection.

Abū al-Malīḥ al-Huthalī (رضي الله عنه) reported that some women from Himṣ¹ visited 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها). She asked them, "Are you from the people who allow their women to go to public baths." They replied, "Yes." She then said that she heard Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) say:

«أيما امرأة وضعت ثيابها في غير بيت زوجها،

فقد هتكت ستر ما بينها وبين الله عز وجل.»

«Any woman who takes off her clothes in other than
her husband's house has indeed broken off the veil
between herself and Allāh (ﷻ).»²

Similarly, Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«أيما امرأة نزع ثيابها في غير بيتها، خرق الله عز وجل عنها ستره.»

«Any woman who takes off her clothes in other than
her husband's house, Allāh (ﷻ) will then remove
His cover off her.»³

The above *ḥadīths* also apply to a woman who undresses in public fitting rooms or in any place where there is any chance for men or women to see parts of her body that only her husband may see.

1 A Shāmī town north of Damascus.

2 Recorded by Aḥmad, at-Tirmithī, Ibn Mājah, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 2710).

3 Recorded by Aḥmad, al-Ḥākim, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 2708).

AVOIDING GOING OUT OF THE HOUSE WITHOUT REASON

In general, the woman's normal abode is her home. It provides her with protection and security, and keeps her away from suspicious situations. A Muslim woman would not go in and out of her home without necessity. She would shy away from any place where she chances mixing with men or being in their close proximity. Allāh advises the Mothers of the Believers, as well as all other women after them, by saying:

﴿وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ، وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَى﴾. الأحزاب ٣٣

«And abide in your homes and do not display yourselves as was the display of the former times of *Jāhiliyyah*.»¹

Financial Responsibility

We have seen in Chapter 1 that the wife shares the responsibility for her home's financial well-being.

SAFEGUARDING HIS POSSESSIONS

A major right for the man on his wife is that she safeguards his property in his absence. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ﴾ النساء ٣٤

«So, righteous women are devoutly obedient (to Allāh), guarding in (their husband's) absence what Allāh commands them to guard (their husband's honor, property, secrets, etc.)»²

Fulfillment of this responsibility is a good act that the Prophet (ﷺ)

¹ *Al-Aḥzāb* 33:33.

² *An-Nisā* 4:34.

praised. Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) once sought to marry a woman from the Quraysh: Umm Hānī' Bint Abī Ṭalib. She had five or six little boys from a deceased husband. She declined the Prophet's (ﷺ) offer, saying:

“O Allāh's Messenger! You are the most beloved of Allāh's creation to me, and you are dearer to me than my hearing and eyesight. But I would hate for you to be annoyed by these boys morning and evening. And indeed, the husband's right is great. So I am afraid that if I turn my care toward my husband, I would neglect my children's right; and if I turn my care toward my children, I would neglect my husband's right.”

So Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«خير نساء ركبن الإبل صالح نساء قريش: أحناه على ولدٍ

في صغره، وأرعاه على زوجها في ذات يده.»

«The best women to ever ride camels are the Quraysh women; they are most caring for their children during their childhood, and most caring for their husband in regard to what he owns.»¹

SPENDING WITH HIS PERMISSION

A woman may not dispense any of her husband's possessions without his permission or implicit consent (i.e., if she is sure that he would not mind) — not even charity. 'Abdullāh Bin 'Amr (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«لا يجوز لامرأة عطية إلا أن يأذن زوجها.»

¹ Recorded by Aḥmad and Ibn Sa'd. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 2523). The text of the Prophet's (ﷺ) words is also recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others, from Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) and Mu'āwiyah (رضي الله عنه) (see *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 2524).

«It is not permissible for a woman to give a donation unless her husband allows that.»¹

FOOD IS PART OF THE TRUST

Food is part of the woman's trust that she should not dispense without her husband's permission. Abū Umāmah al-Bāhilī (رضي الله عنه) and others reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) said in a speech during his Farewell Pilgrimage:

«إن الله قد أعطى كل ذي حق حقه، فلا وصية لوارث.

ولا تنفق المرأة شيئاً من بيتها إلا بإذن زوجها.»

«Allāh has appointed for everyone his due right; thus no bequest may be made to a (standard) heir. And a woman may not spend anything from her house without her husband's permission.»

Someone asked, "O Allāh's Messenger! Not even food?" He replied, «That is our best type of wealth.»²

A SHARED REWARD

If a woman gives charity from her husband's money, knowing that he would not object to that, she would get half of the reward and he the other half.

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إذا أنفقت المرأة من كسب زوجها من غير أمره فله نصف الأجر.»

«when a woman gives charity from her husband's earnings, without his instruction, he gets half of the

¹ Recorded by Abū Dāwūd. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 7626 & *Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 825).

² Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ Abī Dāwūd* no. 3044).

reward.»¹

And Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«لا يحل لامرأة أن تصومَ وزوجها شاهدٌ إلا بإذنه، أو تأذن في بيته إلا

بإذنه، وما أنفقت من نفقة من غير أمره فإنه يؤدى إليها شطره.»

«It is not permissible for a woman to fast, while her husband is present, without his permission — except for *Ramadhān*. Nor is it permissible for her to admit anyone to his house except with his permission. And whatever charity she gives without his instruction, she would be given half of its reward.»²

ʿĀ'ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إذا أنفقت المرأة من طعام بيتها غير مفسدة، كان لها أجرها

بما أنفقت، ولزوجها أجره بما اكتسب.»

«When a women gives away (as charity) from her home's food, without causing harm (to the family), she earns her reward because of her spending, and her husband earns his reward because he provided (the food).»³

USE OF HER OWN MONEY

Islām gives the woman full right to ownership, and her husband has no right to take any of her possessions (including her jewelry, dowry, clothing, etc.) without her permission. However, in order to maintain the harmony of the family and proper order within it — the husband being leader and the woman follower, some restrictions are placed on

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

² Recorded by al-Bukhārī.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

the woman's manner of spending of her own money.

If a woman would have the freedom of spending of her money at will and without reference to her husband, conflicts would soon arise when her spending interferes with some of her husband's decisions or undermines his authority. A simple example would be a case where the husband decides not to buy a car for his teenage son, but the wife interferes saying, "I will buy him one from my own money."

Therefore, Allāh (ﷻ), the most Wise, has decreed that a woman may not spend of her own money without her husband's permission (or implicit consent).

'Abdullāh Bin 'Amr and Ka'b Bin Mālik (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

« لا تجوز لامرأة هبة في مالها إلا بإذن زوجها - إذا ملك زوجها عصمتها. »

«It is not permissible for a woman to donate of her money except with her husband's consent — once her husband gains charge of her (at marriage).»¹

'Abdullāh Bin 'Amr (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

« لا يجوز لامرأة أمر في مالها - إذا ملك زوجها عصمتها. »

«It is not permissible for a woman to (independently) spend of her money — once her husband gains charge of her (at marriage).»²

Wāthilah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

« ليس للمرأة أن تنتهك شيئاً من مالها إلا بإذن زوجها. »

«It is not permissible for a woman to spend of her

1 Recorded by Aḥmad, Ibn Mājah, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 7238).

2 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd and al-Hākim. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 7625 & *Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 825).

money except with her husband's permission.»¹

ISLĀM VS. KĀFIR LAWS

An important note is due here concerning Muslims living in non-Islāmic countries. Regardless of which one of the two spouses paid for a house or other major purchases, the laws of countries like the United States impose that the ownership is shared equally between the two spouses. This is unfair, and it is prohibited for anyone to take that which is not his own.

Thus, if a woman is given half of her husband's property when he dies or if he divorces her, she should not think that she has a right for it. Rather, she must seek her true Islāmic share and give up anything beyond that, remembering the Day when she will stand before Allāh (ﷻ) and He will judge justly between her and all those against whom she had transgressed.

Avoiding Pretence and False Claims

Women often like to show-off what they have or pretend owning things that they do not. This is a practical way of lying that is prohibited in Islām. A righteous woman is like a clear mirror that reflects a good picture.

Asmā' (رضي الله عنها) reported that a woman said, "O Allāh's Messenger, I have a co-wife. Is it wrong for me to pretend having things other than what my husband gave me (to tease her)?" He (ﷺ) replied:

« المتشبع بما لم يعط كلابس ثوبي زور. »

«A person who pretends having that which he does not is like one who wears two garments of deception.»²

1 Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarānī (in *al-Kabīr*) and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 5424 & *Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 775).

2 Recorded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

Tending the Children

Tending the children is a shared responsibility between the two spouses. However, it is more emphasized for the wife because she normally spends more time with the children and is in position to exercise more supervision and guidance with them.

RAISING HER CHILDREN ACCORDING TO ISLĀM

The children are the greatest fruit of marriage. They are a standing demonstration of its success or failure. Guarding the children from all harm and raising them upon the good *Islāmic* teaching is the only sure protection from Satan and the hellfire. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ
وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَاطٌ شِدَادٌ، لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ،
وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ﴾ التحريم ٦

«O you who believe! Protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones. Appointed over it are angels who are harsh and severe. They do not disobey Allāh in what he commands them but do what they are commanded.»¹

Tending her children is one of the woman's greatest responsibilities. Fulfilling it brings pleasure and happiness to her heart and her husband's. She should seriously handle this responsibility and never abandon it for the sake of earning some trivial money outside the home or watching some worthless shows on the television.

BREAST-FEEDING THE CHILDREN

A woman has the obligation of breast feeding her children up to two complete years. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

¹ At-Tahrīm 66:6.

﴿وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرْضِعْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ حَوْلَيْنِ كَامِلَيْنِ لِمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ
يُتِمَّ الرَّضَاعَةَ﴾ البقرة ٢٣٣

«Mothers should nurse their children two complete years — for whoever desires to complete the nursing term.»¹

A woman may not forsake this important obligation unless she has an *Islāmically* acceptable excuse, such as a genuine medical problem. Women who deny their children their nursing rights are liable to punishment in the grave and in the Hereafter.

Abū Umāmah al-Bāhilī (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«بينما أنا نائم إذ أتاني رجلان، فأخذا بضبعي، فأتيا بي جبلاً وعراً،
فقالا: "أصعد." فقلت: "إني لا أطيقه." فقالا: "سنسهله لك."»

«While I was sleeping, two men (angels) came to me, held my upper arms, and took me to a rough mountain. They said, "Climb." I said, "I cannot climb it." They said, "We will make it easy for you."»

He (ﷺ) continued:

«فصعدت، حتى إذا كنتُ في سواءِ الجبل، إذا بأصواتٍ شديدة.
قلت: "ما هذه الأصوات؟" قالوا: "هذا عواءُ أهلِ النَّارِ."»

«So I ascended until I reached a high place in the mountain. I heard fierce cries and asked, "What are those cries?" They replied, "That is the howling of the people of the Fire."»

He (ﷺ) continued:

¹ Al-Baqarah 2:233.

«ثُمَّ أَنْطَلَقَ بِي، فَإِذَا أَنَا بِقَوْمٍ مَعْلُقِينَ بِعِرَاقِيهِمْ، مَشَقَّقَةً أَشْدَأَّهُمْ،
تَسِيلُ أَشْدَأَّهُمْ دَمًا، قُلْتُ: "مَنْ هَؤُلَاءِ؟" قَالَ: "هَؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ يُفْطِرُونَ
قَبْلَ تَحَلَّةِ صَوْمِهِمْ."»

«We moved on until I saw people who were suspended from their Achilles' tendons, their cheeks cut and gushing blood. I asked, "Who are those?" They replied, "Those are the ones who break their fast when that is not permissible.»

He (ﷺ) continued:

«ثُمَّ أَنْطَلَقَ بِي، فَإِذَا أَنَا بِقَوْمٍ أَشَدَّ شَيْءٍ أَنْتِفَاحًا، وَأَنْتَنَةً رِيحًا، وَأَسْوَأَ
مَنْظَرًا، فَقُلْتُ: "مَنْ هَؤُلَاءِ؟" فَقَالَ: "هَؤُلَاءِ قَتْلَى الْكُفَّارِ."»

«We moved on until I saw people who were awfully swollen, and had the most foul stench and the most hideous appearance. I asked, "Who are those?" They replied, "Those are the dead of the *kuffār* (on the battlefield).»

He (ﷺ) continued:

«ثُمَّ أَنْطَلَقَ بِي، فَإِذَا أَنَا بِقَوْمٍ أَشَدَّ شَيْءٍ أَنْتِفَاحًا، وَأَنْتَنَةً رِيحًا، كَأَنَّ رِيحَهُمْ
الْمَرَا حِيصُ، قُلْتُ: "مَنْ هَؤُلَاءِ؟" قَالَ: "هَؤُلَاءِ الزَّانُونَ وَالزَّوَانِي."»

«We moved on until I saw people who were awfully swollen, and had the most foul stench — their stench was like that of gutters. I asked, "Who are those?" They replied, "Those are the male and female adulterers.»

He (ﷺ) continued:

«ثُمَّ أَنْطَلَقَ بِي، فَإِذَا أَنَا بِنِسَاءٍ تَنْهَشُ ثَدْيَهُنَّ الْحَيَّاتُ. قُلْتُ:
"مَا بَالُ هَؤُلَاءِ؟" قَالَ: "هَؤُلَاءِ يَنْعَنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ الْبَانَهُنَّ."»

«We moved on until I saw women with snakes biting at their breasts. I asked, "What is wrong with those?" They replied, "Those are the women who deny their children their milk.»

He (ﷺ) continued:

«ثُمَّ أَنْطَلَقَ بِي، فَإِذَا أَنَا بِالْغُلَّامَانِ يَلْعَبُونَ بَيْنَ نَهْرَيْنِ،
قُلْتُ: "مَنْ هَؤُلَاءِ؟" قَالَ: "هَؤُلَاءِ ذُرَارِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ."»

«We moved on until I saw boys playing between two rivers. I asked, "Who are those?" They replied, "Those are the believers' offspring (who die before puberty).»¹

Conclusion

Every Muslim woman should seek to attain the qualities of a good wife by obeying Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ) — a path that surely leads to paradise. Also, by implementing these qualities, her marriage will be full of happiness. The best of advice to every Muslim woman is to avoid the ways of the *kuffār*. The *kuffār* do not build their families on religion, but on their desires. They ignore the basic differences between men and women and treat them as equals in every regard.

In *Islām*, men and women have different roles. More "public" duties are assigned to men, while women have more influence on the internal affairs of the family and the raising of children. A Muslim woman spends more time with the children than her husband does. If families are not built on the foundation that Allāh ordained, misery,

¹ Recorded by Ibn Khuzaymah (no. 1986), Ibn Hibbān, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ut-Targhīb* no. 991).

hatred, dissension, and corruption will surely rule.

Allāh will surely bless a marriage in which both the husband and wife obey Him and fulfill their obligations toward each other.

THE MOTHERS OF THE BELIEVERS

Introduction

The title “Mothers of the Believers” refers to the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ). Allāh (ﷻ) is the One who granted them this title:

«النَّبِيُّ أَوْلَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ، وَأَزْوَاجُهُ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ» الأحزاب ٦

«The Prophet has more right on the believers than themselves, and his wives are their mothers.» ¹

The Mothers of the Believers deserve special regard and respect. They are the women that Allāh chose for the intimate company of His Messenger (ﷺ). They conveyed to us a great deal of knowledge from their husband, Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ). Like one’s own mother, Allāh prohibited marrying any of the Mothers of the Believers after the Prophet (ﷺ):

«وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْذُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَنْ تُنكِحُوا أَزْوَاجَهُ مِنْ

بَعْدِهِ أَبَدًا، إِنَّ ذَلِكَ كَانَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمًا ۝» الأحزاب ٥٣

«It is not (allowed) for you to harm Allāh’s Messenger or marry his wives after him, ever. Indeed, that would be in Allāh’s sight an enormous (sin).» ²

In this chapter, we present a brief overview about each one of the Mothers of the Believers. The reason for this is their important role in relating to us most of what we know about the Prophet’s (ﷺ) married

¹ Al-Ahzāb 33:6.

² Al-Ahzāb 33:53.

life. Our main references for this are:

1. *Siyaru A'lām in-Nubalā'* (Biographies of the Important Noble People), al-Hāfiẓ Shams ud-Dīn ath-Thahabī, Mu'assasat ur-Risālah, Beirut, 1419 (1998).
2. *Tarājimu A'lām in-Nisā'* (Biographies of the Important Women), Raḍwān Da'būl, Mu'assasat ur-Risālah, Beirut, 1419 (1998).
3. *At-Tārīkh ul-Islāmī* (The *Islāmic* History), Maḥmūd Shākīr, al-Maktab ul-Islāmī, Beirut, 1411 (1991).

Khadījah Bint Khuwaylid

Khadījah Bint Khuwaylid (ﷺ) was the best of all women of her time. She was the daughter of Khuwaylid Bin Asad Bin 'Abd il-'Uzzā Bin Quṣayy Bin Kilāb from the Quraysh. Before *Islām*, she was called aṭ-Ṭāhirah (the Pure one).

Khadījah was a wealthy woman, and she hired the Prophet (ﷺ) to manage her trade to Shām¹. Noticing his honesty and good management, she offered herself to him in marriage, and he agreed.

Prior to the Prophet (ﷺ), she was married to Abū Hālah Bin Zurārah at-Tamīmī, then to 'Atīq Bin 'Abid Bin 'Abdillāh Bin 'Umar Bin Makhzūm. The Prophet (ﷺ) married her when he was twenty-five years old and she was forty.

She bore the Prophet (ﷺ) seven children: three boys (al-Qāsim, aṭ-Ṭayyib, and aṭ-Ṭāhir) and four girls (Ruqayyah, Zaynab, Umm Kulthūm, and Fāṭimah)². The boys died in their early childhood, and the first three girls died in al-Madīnah during the Prophet's (ﷺ) lifetime. Fāṭimah (ﷺ) died a few months after her father.

Khadījah was the first person to believe in the Prophet (ﷺ) and support him. Jibrīl (ﷺ) would often ask the Prophet (ﷺ) to give

¹ Damascus and the surrounding lands.

² Whereas the girls are known and confirmed, the historians differ in regard to the boys — to the extent that some of them say that he had no boys at all from Khadījah, and others say that he only had al-Qāsim, and so on.

salām to Khadījah:

«يا خديجة، جبريل يُقرئك السلام.»

«O Khadījah, Jibrīl gives you salām.»

«”يا محمد، اقرأ على خديجة من ربها السلام.”»

«O Muḥammad, give salām to Khadījah from her Lord.»¹

Khadījah was one of the three complete women that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) named:

«كَمَلُ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ كَثِيرٌ، وَلَمْ يَكْمُلْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِلَّا أَسِيَّةُ أَمْرَأَةٍ

فِرْعَوْنَ، وَمَرْيَمُ بِنْتُ عِمْرَانَ (، وَخَدِيجَةُ بِنْتُ خُوَيْلِدٍ). وَفَضْلُ

عَائِشَةَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ كَفَضْلِ الشَّرِيدِ عَلَى سَائِرِ الطَّعَامِ.»

«Many men were complete (in faith, character, and *taqwā*), but only (three) women were complete: Āsiyah the wife of Pharaoh, Maryam Bint 'Imrān, and Khadījah Bint Khuwaylid. And the excellence of 'Ā'ishah over other women is like the excellence of *tharīd*² over other types of food.»³

Also, the Prophet (ﷺ) named her as one of four who are the best women of all times:

«خَيْرُ نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ أَرْبَعٌ: مَرْيَمُ بِنْتُ عِمْرَانَ، وَخَدِيجَةُ بِنْتُ خُوَيْلِدٍ،

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

² A dish made of bread and meat broth. It is full of nutrients and easy to digest.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others from Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī. The part about Khadījah is only recorded by Ibn Mardawayh from Qurrah Bin Iyās (see *Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 4578).

وفاطمة بنت محمد، وآسية امرأة فرعون.

«The best of the people's women are four: Maryam Bint 'Imrān, Khadījah Bint Khuwaylid, Fāṭimah Bint Muḥammad, and Āsiyah the wife of Pharaoh.»¹

The Prophet (ﷺ) did not marry before Khadījah, and did not marry another woman while she was married to him. When she died, he was deeply grieved.

'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) said that when Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) mentioned Khadījah, he would not get bored of mentioning her, praising her, and seeking Allāh's forgiveness for her. One day, her jealousy won over and she commented, "Allāh has given you better than that old woman." She saw signs of extreme anger on his face. She felt so sorry for saying that, and thought to herself, "O Allāh, if you take away Your Messenger's anger, I will never again say anything bad about her." When the Prophet (ﷺ) noticed her regret he said:

«كيف قلت؟ واللّه لقد آمنت بي إذ كذّبتني الناس، وآتوني

إذ رفضني الناس، ورزقت منها الولد وحُرمتُموه مني.»

«How could you have said that! By Allāh, she believed in me when the other people rejected me, and sheltered me when the other people expelled me. And I was granted children from her, whereas you (other wives) were denied to have children from me.»

'Ā'ishah added, "He continued to say that to me, morning and evening, for a full month."²

In another report, 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) said that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

¹ Recorded by Ahmad, at-Tirmithī, and others, from Anas and Jābir. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 3328 & 3143).

² Recorded by ad-Dūlābī in *ath-Thurriyat uṭ-Ṭāhirah*. Verified to be *ḥasan* by Shu'ayb al-Arnā'ūṭ (*Siyaru A'lām in-Nubalā'* 2:112).

«ما أبدلني الله خيراً منها. لقد آمنت بي حين كفر الناس، وأشركتني

في مالها حين حرمني الناس، ورزقني الله ولدها، وحرمني ولد غيرها.»

«No, Allāh did not give me anyone who is better. She believed in me when the other people disbelieved, made me a partner in her wealth when the other people refused to give me, and Allāh granted me children from her whereas he denied me children from anyone else.»¹

Khadījah (رضي الله عنها) ranks high among the Muslim women of all time. This was a result of her unwavering support of her best of husbands. She believed in him, offered him emotional and financial support, and reassured him in times of worry. Allāh granted her *Jannah* for this crucial role that she played in the life of the Prophet (ﷺ), and hence, in the life of every Muslim. The Prophet treasured her memory and kept relations with her friends long after her death. Allāh granted her the position of being the mother of all the decedents of the Prophet (ﷺ). All Muslim women should benefit from the example of Khadījah.

Khadījah (رضي الله عنها) died three years before *Hijrah*, and was buried in al-Ḥajūn (a mountain above Makkah). She was then about sixty-five years old.

Sawdah Bint Zam'ah

Sawdah Bint Zam'ah Bin Qays (رضي الله عنها) was from the Quraysh. She was previously married to as-Sakrān Bin 'Amr al-'Amirī, and they both were among the earliest people to embrace *Islām*. She migrated with him to al-Ḥabashah (Abyssinia). After their return, he died, and the Prophet (ﷺ) later on married her. He married her in Makkah during *Ramaḍān* on the tenth year of his prophethood. She was approximately in her fifties when they got married. Immediately after his *Hijrah*, he brought her to join him in al-Madīnah.

¹ Recorded by Ahmad, and substantiated by the previous report.

Sawdah was the first woman that the Prophet (ﷺ) married after Khadījah. She was his only wife for more than three years — until he married 'Ā'ishah.

Because of her old age, Sawdah soon lost interest in men and felt that she was unable to fully please the Prophet (ﷺ). Thus, when the Prophet (ﷺ) married 'Ā'ishah, Sawdah gave up her turn with him to her in order to appease him — in case he had any thoughts of divorcing her.

She was a large, noble, and respectable woman. She died in al-Madīnah near the end of the *khilāfah* of 'Umar (رضي الله عنه).

'Ā'ishah Bint Abī Bakr

'Ā'ISHAH'S MARRIAGE

'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) was the daughter of aṣ-Ṣiddīq (the most truthful): Abū Bakr 'Abdullāh (رضي الله عنه) Bin Abī Quḥafah 'Uthmān Bin 'Āmir Bin Ka'b Bin Sa'd Bin Taym Bin Murrah from the Quraysh. She is the most knowledgeable woman of this *Ummah* without exception. Her mother was Umm Rūmān Bint 'Āmir Bin 'Uwaymir, from the Kinānah.

'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) was born in *Islām*. She said, "I never saw my parents but practicing the *Dīn*." She was about eight years younger than Fāṭimah (رضي الله عنها).

Her marriage contract was performed between the Prophet (ﷺ) and her father about two years before *Hijrah*. That was the same year that he (ﷺ) married Sawdah. She migrated with her parents to al-Madīnah, and the Prophet (ﷺ) consummated his marriage with her immediately after the battle of Badr, during the month of *Shawwāl*. She was then nine years old¹. She remained with him for about nine years.

¹ A girl of nine may still be a few years too young for marriage in most of today's cultures. However, the standards concerning the age of marriage were very different in earlier cultures. There are many documented cases of girls getting married in their early "teens", and thereafter living a most normal life and bearing many healthy children. That is by far better than the free practice of fornication among most of the so-called "civilized" young girls of our time, which has led to numerous cases of "teen" pregnancy, fatherless children,

'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported:

"Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) married me (i.e. made the contract) shortly after the death of Khadījah, when I was six years old. I was brought in to him (for marriage consummation) when I was nine. Some women came to me when I was playing on a swing, my hair long and reaching my shoulders. They adorned and beautified me, and then took me to him."¹

Asmā' Bint Yazīd Bin as-Sakan² reported that she adorned 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) for the Prophet (ﷺ) and then invited him to come and see her. He came and sat next to her. He was given a large cup of milk. He drank some of it and then gave it to her. She shyly lowered her head, and Asmā' scolded her saying, "Do not reject Allāh's Messenger's offer." So she took the cup and drank some. The Prophet (ﷺ) then told her, «أعطي تريك.» «Give your friend.» Asmā' said, "O Allāh's Messenger! First take it back and drink from it, then give it to me with your hand." He took it, drank from it, and then gave it to her. She sat down, put it on her knees, and turned it around until she had her lips on the spot where the Prophet (ﷺ) drank³. Then he pointed to some other women who were with her and said, «ناولني صواحبك.» «Give your friends.» They said, "We have no desire for

venereal diseases, drug addictions, and so on.

Furthermore, in tropical and hot climates, it is very common for the girls to mature at a very early age, which was the case with 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها), as is obvious from numerous actions and incidents that are reported about her during her "teens" life with Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ).

Finally, there is no doubt that Allāh (ﷻ) has chosen 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) and prepared her, from her early years, to be a worthy carrier of a great portion of the knowledge of prophethood.

- ¹ Recorded by Abū Dāwūd. Verified to be authentic by Shu'ayb al-Arnā'ūṭ (*Siyar al-ʿAlam in-Nuḥalā* 2:228).
- ² She was Muṭṭi Bin Jabal's cousin: one of the *Ansār* women who gave her covenant to the Prophet (ﷺ) during Bay'at ur-Riḍwān. She lived until the time of Yazīd Bin Mu'āwiyah.
- ³ Seeking the blessing from Allāh's Messenger's (ﷺ) touch.

it.” He said:

« لا تجمعن جوعاً وكذباً. »

«Do not combine hunger with lying.»¹

‘Ā’ISHAH’S YOUTH

Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) saw the childish side in ‘Ā’ishah’s nature during her early years with him, and dealt with this understandably. She narrated:

“I used to play with dolls, and some of my young female friends used to come to play with me. When Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) came home, they would hide away; and when he left, they would come back. And he used to send them to play with me.”²

She also narrated that when Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) came back from the battle of Tabūk (or Khaybar), she had an alcove covered with a curtain. The wind blew away the curtain exposing some dolls. He asked, «ما هذا يا عائشة؟» **What is this, O ‘Ā’ishah?** She replied, “These are my dolls.” He saw in their midst a horse with leather wings and asked, «ما هذا الذي أرى وسطهن؟» **What is this that I see in their midst?** She said, “A horse.” He asked, «وما هذا الذي عليه؟» **And what is that thing on it?** She replied, “Two wings.” He exclaimed, «فرس له جناحان؟» **A horse with two wings?** She said, “Haven’t you heard that Sulaymān had horses with wings?” So he laughed until she could see his inner teeth.³

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that once when she was very young she went with the Prophet (ﷺ) on a journey. At one point he told his companions, «تقدموا.» **Move ahead of us.** Then he told her, «تعالى حتى أسابقك.» **Come, let me race you.** They raced, and she won

¹ Recorded by Aḥmad. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Ādāb uz-Zifāf* p. 92).

² Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

³ Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasā’ī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ Abī Dāwūd* no. 4123).

the race. A few years later, after she had grown heavier, she went with the Prophet (ﷺ) on another journey. He told his companions, «تقدموا.» **Move ahead of us.** Then he told her, «تعالى حتى أسابقك.» **Come, let me race you.** They raced, and he won the race. He said, «هذه بتلك.» **This win is for that (previous) one.**¹

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) also reported that once some Abyssinians came as a delegation to the Prophet (ﷺ). During a ‘īd day, they played inside the *Masjid* with their spears. ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) wanted to stop them, but the Prophet (ﷺ) told him, «دعهم.» **Leave them alone.**² The Prophet (ﷺ) stood at the door leading from ‘Ā’ishah’s room into the *Masjid* and invited her to stand behind him and watch their games. She added:

“They played inside the *Masjid*. Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) used his over-garment to cover me as I watched. I stood behind him, my chin on his shoulder, and my face against his. He waited patiently until I satisfied my curiosity and wanted to leave — So you should understand a young girl’s need (for play).”³

THE ONLY VIRGIN

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) developed into a beautiful fair woman. That is why she was called *al-Ḥumayrā’*: the little white one.⁴

The Prophet (ﷺ) did not marry a virgin other than ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها); and she used to boast about that to him. She once asked him, “O Allāh’s Messenger, if you were to stop for rest in a valley in which you find trees that have been grazed on, and one tree on which no one has grazed, on which tree would you make your camel graze?” He

¹ Recorded by an-Nasā’ī, Ibn Mājah, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi’* no. 7007).

² The part about ‘Umar is recorded by Muslim and an-Nasā’ī from Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه).

³ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

⁴ In fact, *ḥamrā’* means “red”, and *ḥumayrā’* means “little red” (both in the feminine gender). But the early Arabs often applied the “red” description to “white” things, reserving the “white” description for “purity” and related meanings (*Lisān ub-‘Arab*).

replied, «الشجرة التي لم يؤكل منها.» **<The tree on which no one has grazed.>** She said, "I am that tree."¹

THE MOST BELOVED WIFE

The Prophet (ﷺ) loved 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) more than all his other wives. 'Amr Bin al-Āṣ (رضي الله عنه) reported that he asked Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ), "O Allāh's Messenger! Who is the most beloved to you among the people?" He replied, «عائشة.» **<Ā'ishah.>** He asked, "And from among the men?" He replied, «أبوها.» **<Her father.>**²

The Prophet's (ﷺ) extreme love to 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) was a public knowledge among the Muslims — and he (ﷺ) would not love but good things. Thus he chose the best two individuals of his *Ummah* as his beloved ones. When a person loves them, that would indicate his love of Allāh and his Messenger (ﷺ); and when a person hates them, he would not be worthy of the love of Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ).

EXCELLENCE OVER OTHER WOMEN

'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) excels over other women by qualities that made the Prophet (ﷺ) state:

«فضل عائشة على النساء كفضل الثريد على سائر الطعام.»

<The excellence of 'Ā'ishah over other women is like the excellence of *tharīd* over other types of food.>³

This excellence must be based on a divine command, which made the Prophet (ﷺ) love her more than his other wives.

As will be seen in the next chapter, 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) was the only one among the Mothers of the Believers that Jibrīl came with the revelation to the Prophet (ﷺ) while he was under the same blanket with her. On a number of occasions, the Prophet (ﷺ) would say to her:

1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī from 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها).

2 Recorded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

3 Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others from Anas. A similar statement has been cited earlier from the *ḥadīth* of Abū Mūsā.

«يا عائشة، هذا جبريل يُقرئك السلام.»

<O 'Ā'ishah, Jibrīl is here, and he gives you salām.>¹

THE GREAT SLANDER

Realizing the great position of 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) in the Prophet's (ﷺ) heart, the hypocrites tried to attack him in his honor through her. In 5 H, the Prophet (ﷺ) was returning to al-Madīnah from al-Muraysī battle. 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) was with him, and was then twelve years old. Near the end of the trip, the army stopped for rest.

Just before their night departure, 'Ā'ishah found her necklace missing and went searching for it. She came back to find that the army had departed. She wrapped herself in her clothes and sat waiting for some people to come back for her. After a while, she fell asleep.

Ṣafwān Bin al-Mu'attal (رضي الله عنه) was riding behind the army, trying to catch up with it. He reached 'Ā'ishah's place in the morning, saw her dark figure, and realized who she was. He dismounted off his camel and waited for her to ride on it, then walked in front of her, leading the camel, until he caught up with the army where it stopped again for rest near noon.

This was a golden chance for the head of the hypocrites, 'Abdullāh Bin Abī Salūl, and his supporters to slander 'Ā'ishah, her husband (ﷺ), and the whole *Ummah*, by accusing her of committing *zinā* with Ṣafwān.

This grieved the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Muslims for a full month — until Allāh revealed ten *āyāt* declaring her innocence and condemning all those who joined in slandering her². The Prophet (ﷺ) then told her:

«أما والله، لقد برأك الله.»

<Indeed, by Allāh, Allāh has declared your

1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

2 *An-Nūr* 24:11-20.

innocence!»¹

‘Ā’ISHAH’S JEALOUSY

Despite the great love that the Prophet (ﷺ) showed to ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها), she was extremely jealous over him. Some incidents demonstrating this are cited in the next chapter. It is interesting to note, as we saw earlier, that her jealousy extended to Khadījah (رضي الله عنها) who died three years before her marriage. She said:

“I was never jealous of any woman as much as I was jealous of Khadījah — because of Allāh’s Messenger’s (ﷺ) frequent mention of her.”²

Anas and Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها) reported that once when the Prophet (ﷺ) was in ‘Ā’ishah’s house with some of his companions, Umm Salamah sent to him a plate of food. When ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) saw it, she took a rock the size of a hand and hit the plate with it, breaking it to two pieces. The Prophet (ﷺ) gathered the plate’s parts and told his companions:

«كلوا، غارت أمكم. كلوا، غارت أمكم.»

«Eat — your mother has been jealous! Eat — your mother has been jealous.»

So they ate. The Prophet (ﷺ) then kept the broken plate in ‘Ā’ishah’s house, sent a good plate of hers to Umm Salamah, and said:

«إناء كإِناءٍ، وطعامٌ كطعام.»

«A comparable plate for a (damaged) plate, and a comparable food for a (damaged) food.»³

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others from ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها).

² Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

³ Recorded by an-Nasā’ī, Ibn Mājah, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā’ul-Ghālīl* no. 1523).

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that one night she could not find the Prophet (ﷺ) next to her. Then she found him (praying), so she passed her fingers through his hair (to see if he had showered). He said:

«قد جاءك شيطانك.»

«Your devil has surely come to you!»

She asked, “O Allāh’s Messenger! Do you not have a devil?” He replied:

«بلى، ولكن الله أعانني عليه فأسلم.»

«Yes indeed, but Allāh helped me against him so that he embraced *Islām*.»¹

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that she missed the Prophet (ﷺ) one night and thought that he went to another one of his wives. She started looking for him and found him praying, in *rukū’* or *sujūd*, whispering:

«سبحانك وبحمدك، لا إله إلا أنت.»

«*Subhānaka wa-biḥamdik, lā ilāha illā ant* — Exalted be You, and praise to You; there is no god (worthy of being worshipped) except You.»

She then said, “May my father and mother be your ransom: Indeed, you are involved in one affair (worship), and I in a different affair (jealousy).”²

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that one night when it was her turn with Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ), he retired to bed, took off his upper garment, took off his shoes and put them near his feet. He then spread the edge of his *izār* (lower garment), and lied down. He waited until he thought that she was asleep, then quietly got up and took his upper garment,

¹ Recorded by an-Nasā’ī. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīhu Sunan in-Nasā’ī* no. 3696).

² Recorded by Muslim, an-Nasā’ī, and others.

put on his shoes, opened the door and stepped out, quietly closing it behind him. 'Ā'ishah quickly put on her dress, wore her head-cover, wrapped around her *izār*, and ran after him.

The Prophet (ﷺ) walked to al-Baqī¹, stood for a long time, and raised his hands three times. Then he turned around, and 'Ā'ishah turned; he trotted, and she trotted; he ran, and she ran — until they both reached the houses. She hurried ahead of him and entered her house. As soon as she lied down, he (ﷺ) entered and exclaimed, «**What is wrong with you, O 'Ā'ish², panting and your abdomen rising and falling?**» She replied, «Nothing O Allāh's Messenger.» He said, «**لَتُخْبِرُنِي أَوْ لَيُخْبِرُنِي اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ.**» «**You either tell me, or the Most-Subtle and Well-Aware will tell me.**» So she said, «May my father and mother be a ransom for you, O Allāh's Messenger,» and she told him what had happened. He asked, «**فَأَنْتِ السَّوَادُ الَّذِي رَأَيْتَهُ أَمَامِي؟**» «**So you were the black thing that I saw before me?**» She replied, «Yes!» He pushed her playfully in the chest and said, «**أَظَنْتِ أَنْ يَحِيفَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ وَرَسُولُهُ؟**» «**Did you think that Allāh and His Messenger would be unfair to you (by giving your rightful time to another wife)?**» She said, «Whatever the people hide, Allāh knows.» He said:

«فَإِنْ جَبْرِيلُ أَتَانِي حِينَ رَأَيْتِ، فَنَادَانِي فَأَخْفَاهُ مِنْكَ، فَأَجَبْتُهُ
فَأَخْفَيْتُهُ مِنْكَ، وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لِيَدْخُلْ عَلَيْكَ وَقَدْ وَضَعْتَ ثِيَابَكَ.
وظننتُ أنْ قد رقدتِ، فكرهتُ أنْ أوقظَكَ، وخشيتُ أنْ تستوحِشِي.
فقال: «إِنْ رَبُّكَ يَأْمُرُكَ أَنْ تَأْتِيَ أَهْلَ الْبَقِيعِ فَتَسْتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ.»»

«Yes! Verily, Jibrīl came to me when you saw that. He called me without letting you hear, and I responded to him without letting you know. He was not to enter into your house after you have laid down your clothes. I thought that you had slept, and hated to wake you up, fearing that you would feel

1 A graveyard to the north of the Prophet's (ﷺ) *Masjid* in which many of the *ṣaḥābah* and Mothers of the Believers were buried.

2 A nickname with which Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) sometimes called his wife.

lonely (if you knew that I was leaving). Jibrīl told me, «Your Lord commands you to go to the (dead) people of al-Baqī and ask forgiveness for them.»»

'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) asked, «What should I say for them, O Allāh's Messenger?» He (ﷺ) instructed:

«السَّلَامُ عَلَى أَهْلِ الدِّيَارِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ، وَيَرْحَمُ اللَّهُ
الْمُسْتَقْدِمِينَ مِنَّا وَالْمُسْتَأْخِرِينَ، وَإِنَّا إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ لِلْآخِقُونَ.»

As-Salāmu 'alā ahl id-diyāri min al-mu'minīna wal-muslimīn, wa-yarḥam Ullāh ul-mustaqdimīna minnā wal-musta'khirīn, wa-innā in shā'a 'llāhu bikum lalāḥiqūn.

Peace be on the dwellers of these places — of believers and Muslims. May Allāh have mercy upon the earlier and later among us. Certainly, we will follow you when Allāh wills.»¹

AL-JAMAL FIGHT

In 18 *Thulḥijjah* of 35 H, 'Uthmān (رضي الله عنه) was assassinated through a plot by 'Abdullāh Bin Saba' and other enemies of *Islām*. A few days after that, 'Alī (رضي الله عنه) was appointed as the new *Khalīfah*. 'Alī, 'Ā'ishah, and the other chief *ṣaḥābah* were intent on resolving the problems following 'Uthmān's (رضي الله عنه) assassination — most importantly, finding and punishing the assassins, and reestablishing the authority of the *khilāfah*.

However, Ibn Saba' and his followers continued their plotting, and succeeded in dragging the *ṣaḥābah* into a fight against each other, with 'Ā'ishah, Ṭalḥah, and az-Zubayr on one side against 'Alī, 'Ammar, and other companions. That was called the battle of al-Jamal, because it centered around the camel carrying 'Ā'ishah's howdah.

The battle took place in the middle of *Jumādā al-Ākhirah* 36 H. 'Alī (رضي الله عنه) won the battle, but after more than ten thousand Muslims,

¹ Recorded by Muslim, Aḥmad, and others.

including Ṭalhah and az-Zubayr, were killed.

After winning the battle, 'Alī treated 'Ā'ishah respectfully, and sent her safely to her home. 'Ammār Bin Yāsir (رضي الله عنه) said in a speech prior to the fight, "Indeed, we know that she is our Prophet's (ﷺ) wife in the first and last lives."¹

'Ā'ishah's and her supporters' involvement in that fight was based on *ijtihād*, and was for the pleasure of Allāh. Yet, they realized later that their position was wrong, and 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) deeply regretted that till her last days.

DEATH

'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) conveyed a great amount of knowledge from the Prophet (ﷺ) and a number of his companions, including Abū Bakr and 'Umar (رضي الله عنه). Her recorded narrations are more than two thousand, three hundred of which are recorded in al-Bukhārī, Muslim, or both.

'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) was generous and charitable, and she lived a very moderate living.

'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) died in 57 H in al-Madīnah and was buried in al-Baqī'.

Zaynab Bint Khuzaymah

Zaynab Bint Khuzaymah Bin al-Hārith Bin 'Abdillāh al-Hilāliyyah (رضي الله عنها) was also called Umm ul-Masākīn (Mother of the Needy) because of her great benevolence. She and Maymūnah were maternal sisters.

She was previously married to aṭ-Ṭufayl Bin al-Hārith. After his death, his brother 'Ubaydah Bin al-Hārith married her. The latter was killed in the battle of Uḥud, so Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) married her soon thereafter.

She remained with Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) only for about two months and then died at the age of thirty. She was the first of the Mothers of the Believers to be buried in al-Baqī'.

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī and at-Tirmithī.

Umm Salamah

LINEAGE

Umm Salamah's (رضي الله عنها) name was Hind Bint Abī Umayyah. She was from the Makhzūm branch of the Quraysh. She was the cousin of Khālīd Bin al-Walīd and Abū Jahl Bin Hishām.

She was a most beautiful woman, and of a most honorable descent.

She was among the first Muslim women who migrated to al-Madīnah. Prior to the Prophet (ﷺ), she was married to his foster-brother, Abū Salamah Bin 'Abd il-Asad al-Makhzūmī (رضي الله عنه).

MARRIAGE TO THE PROPHET

Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها) reported that she once heard Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) say:

«ما من مسلم تصيبه مصيبة فيقول ما أمره الله:

«إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ» اللَّهُمَّ آجِرْنِي فِي مُصِيبَتِي

وَأَخْلِفْ لِي خَيْرًا مِنْهَا» إِلَّا أَخْلَفَ اللَّهُ لَهُ خَيْرًا مِنْهَا.

«Whenever an affliction strikes a Muslim and he says as Allāh commanded him, «To Allāh we belong, and to Him will we return,» O Allāh, reward me for my affliction and substitute it for me with that which is better,» Allāh will surely substitute it for him with that which is better.»

Thus, when Abū Salamah died, she thought, "Who among the Muslims can be better than Abū Salamah? He is from the first family that migrated to Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ)!" Yet, she said the above supplication, and Allāh substituted him for her with Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ). Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) sent Ḥāṭib Bin Abī Balta'ah seeking her hand in marriage. She told him, "I have a daughter (to look after), and am a jealous woman (and you have several wives)." So Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«أما ابنتُها، فندعو الله أن يغنيها عنها. وأدعو الله أن يذهبَ بالغيرة.»

«As for her daughter, we ask Allāh to suffice her from her. And I ask Allāh to remove her jealousy.»¹

In another report, Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها) said that when Abū Salamah (رضي الله عنه) died, she went to the Prophet (ﷺ) and told him, “O Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ)! Abū Salamah has passed away.” He instructed her to say:

«اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَلَهُ، وَأَعْقِبْنِي مِنْهُ عَقِبِي حَسَنَةً.»

«O Allāh, forgive me and him, and succeed him for me with that which is good.»

She concluded, “Allāh then succeeded him for me with one who is better for me than him: Muḥammad (ﷺ)!”²

The Prophet (ﷺ) married her in 4 H. She was then approximately thirty. All three of her children, ‘Umar, Salamah, and Zaynab, became *ṣaḥābah*. And she also was one of the knowledgeable *ṣaḥābah*.

DEATH

Umm Salamah was the last of the Mothers of the Believers to die. She lived until she was informed about the killing of al-Husayn Bin ‘Alī (رضي الله عنه). That greatly saddened her, and she died soon after. This was in 61 H, and she was then approximately ninety years old. She was buried in al-Baqī’.

Ḥaḥṣah Bint ‘Umar

Ḥaḥṣah (رضي الله عنها) was the daughter of ‘Umar Bin al-Khaṭṭāb Bin Nufayl (رضي الله عنه) from the Quraysh. Her mother was Zaynab Bint Maz‘ūn,

1 Recorded by Muslim, al-Bayhaqī, and Aḥmad.

2 Recorded by Muslim, al-Bayhaqī, and others.

‘Uthmān Bin Maz‘ūn sister.

Ḥaḥṣah was previously married to Khunays Bin Ḥuthāfah as-Sahmī. He was one of the early Muslims who migrated first to al-Ḥabashah (Abyssinia). He fought in Badr and Uḥud, and died from his wounds right after Uḥud on the third year of *al-Hijrah*.

After Khunays’s death, ‘Umar offered Ḥaḥṣah to Abū Bakr and ‘Uthmān, but they both declined marrying her. This upset ‘Umar, but the Prophet (ﷺ) consoled him saying:

«يتزوج حفصة من هو خير من عثمان،

ويتزوج عثمان من هي خير من حفصة.»

«One who is better than ‘Uthmān will marry Ḥaḥṣah, and ‘Uthmān will marry one who is better than Ḥaḥṣah.»¹

When the Prophet (ﷺ) married Ḥaḥṣah, she was approximately twenty years old. The Prophet (ﷺ) divorced her once, probably for exposing a secret that he commanded her to keep (as will be discussed below), but Allāh ordered him to take her back. He said:

«قال لي جبريلُ (عليه السلام): ”راجع حفصة، فإنها

صَوَّامَةٌ قَوَّامَةٌ، وإنها زوجتك في الجنة.“»

«Jibrīl told me, “Take back Ḥaḥṣah, because she extensively fasts and prays at night, and she will be your wife in *Jannah*.”»²

She died in approximately 41 H in al-Madīnah.

1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī and Ibn Sa’d from Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه).

2 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasā’ī, and others, from ‘Umar and Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه). Verified to be authentic by Shu’ayb al-Arnā’ūṭ (*Sīyar al-ʿAlām in-Nubalā* 2:228).

Zaynab Bint Jahsh

Zaynab Bint Jahsh Bin Rayāb (رضي الله عنها) was the daughter of Umaymah Bint 'Abd ul-Muṭṭalib Bin Hāshim, the Prophet's (ﷺ) paternal aunt. She was born approximately 20 years before the beginning of the Prophet's (ﷺ) mission.

She embraced *Islām* in Makkah early during the mission of the Prophet (ﷺ), and was married to Zayd Bin Hārithah, the *mawlā* (freed slave) of Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ). Their marriage was not successful and it ended with divorce. Immediately after, Allāh's command came for the Prophet (ﷺ) to marry her.¹

She used to boast about that and say:

"It is your parents who gave you in marriage; but as for me, Allāh gave me in marriage from above His Throne."²

She was righteous, generous, and charitable. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«أَسْرَعُكُمْ لِحَوْقًا بِي أَطُولُكُمْ يَدًا.»

<The one among you (my wives) who will join me first is the one with the longest arms (i.e., most charitable).>³

'Ā'ishah said:

"All of them (the Mothers of the Believers) used to compete in being charitable, but Zaynab excelled because she used to work (to earn money) and then give it in charity."⁴

Thus, it is more correct to say that this *ḥadīth* applied to her,

¹ *Al-Aḥzāb* 33:37.

² Recorded by al-Bukhārī and others.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim from 'Ā'ishah.

⁴ Recorded by Muslim.

contrary to what some of the narrators thought (that it applied to Sawdah).

'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) also described her saying:

"She was the one who rivaled me in status with Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ). I have not seen a more righteous woman than Zaynab, nor one with more *taqwā* of Allāh, more truthful speech, more kindness to her relatives, more benevolence, and more dedication in the work that she did for charity ... except for a hot temper that she had, but quickly restrained. May Allāh be pleased with her."¹

The above *ḥadīth* indicates that Zaynab died before Sawdah. She died in 20 H, and 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) prayed over her. She was buried in al-Baqī'.

Juwayriyah Bint al-Hārith

Juwayriyah (رضي الله عنها) was the daughter of al-Hārith Bin Abī Dirār. Her name was Barraḥ, but the Prophet changed it to Juwayriyah.² She was from the tribe of al-Muṣṭaliq, and was taken as a war-captive during the battle of al-Muraysī' in 5 H. When the Prophet (ﷺ) married her, she was twenty years old, and she died approximately 50 years later.

She was a most beautiful woman, as attested by her co-wife 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها):

"When Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) divided the war captives of the tribe of al-Muṣṭaliq, Juwayriyah Bint al-Hārith was given to Thābit Bin Qays Bin ash-Shammās (or a cousin of his). She made a contract with him to free herself for money. She was a most beautiful woman, no one seeing her but being baffled by her beauty. She came to Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) seeking his help in

¹ Recorded by Muslim and Aḥmad.

² This is recorded by Muslim and others from Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه).

paying herself off.

By Allāh, when I saw her at my door, I hated her (for her beauty), and knew that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) will find in her what I have found (of beauty). She came in and said, 'O Allāh's Messenger! I am Juwayriyah Bint al-Ḥārith Bin Abī Ḍirār, the chief of his people, and I have been touched by affliction as you are well aware. I have been allotted to Thābit Bin Qays Bin ash-Shammās (or a cousin of his). I have made a contract with him to pay myself off, and came seeking your help in that.' He said, «فهل لك خير من ذلك؟» **<Would you like to consider a better deal?>** She asked, 'What is it, O Allāh's Messenger?' He said, «أقضي عنك كتابتك وأتزوجك.» **<I pay that off for you and marry you.>** She said, 'Certainly, O Allāh's Messenger.' He said, «قد فعلت.» **<It is done.>**

When the news came out that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) had married Juwayriyah, the Muslims freed their captives from al-Muṣṭaliq, who had become the Prophet's (ﷺ) brethren in law. Thus, one hundred households from al-Muṣṭaliq were freed, and I do not know any woman who brought more blessings to her people than Juwayriyah did."¹

Umm Ḥabībah

Umm Ḥabībah's (رضي الله عنها) name was Ramlah Bint Abī Sufyān. Abū Sufyān's name was Ṣakhr Bin Ḥarb Bin Umayyah Bin 'Abd Shams Bin 'Abd Mināf Bin Qaṣiyy. She was also the sister of Mu'āwiyah Bin Abī Sufyān.

She was the Prophet's (ﷺ) paternal cousin, and the closest of all his wives in relationship to him.

She migrated to al-Ḥabashah (Abyssinia) with her husband 'Ubaydullāh Bin Jaḥsh. In al-Ḥabashah, he apostated and died as a

¹ Recorded by Aḥmad and Ibn Hishām. Verified to be authentic by Shu'ayb al-Arnā'ūt (*Siyaru A'lām in-Nubalā'* 2:262).

Christian. The Prophet (ﷺ) then sent 'Amr Bin Umayyah to an-Najāshī requesting to marry her. An-Najāshī married her to the Prophet (ﷺ), gave her four thousand *dirhams* and presents, and sent her to al-Madīnah guarded by Sharḥabīl Bin Ḥasanah. She arrived in al-Madīnah on the sixth year of *al-Hijrah*, and was then over thirty years old.

She died during the rule of her brother Mu'āwiyah, in 42 or 44 H.

Ṣafiyyah Bint Ḥuyayy

Ṣafiyyah Bint Ḥuyayy Bin Akḥṭab Bin Sa'yah (رضي الله عنها) descended from the prophet Hārūn (عليه السلام), who in turn descended from Lāwī (Levi) Bin Ya'qūb (Jacob) Bin Ishāq (عليه السلام).

She was previously married to Salām Bin Abī al-Ḥaqīq, and then to his brother Kinānah Bin Abī al-Ḥaqīq. Kinānah was killed during the battle of Khaybar, and Ṣafiyyah was taken as a war-captive, but the Prophet (ﷺ) freed her and married her. She was then approximately seventeen years old.

She was noble, honorable, wise, beautiful, and righteous. Anas reported that once Ṣafiyyah heard that Ḥafṣah said about her that, "She is nothing but the daughter of a Jew." She wept because of this, and when Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) saw her weeping and asked her why, she told him what Ḥafṣah had said. He (ﷺ) said:

«إنك لابنة نبي، وإن عمك لنبي، وإنك لتحت نبي، ففيم تفخر عليك؟»

<Indeed, you are a prophet's daughter (Hārūn); and indeed, your uncle (Mūsā) is a prophet; and indeed, you are married to a prophet. So, why is she boasting over you?>

He then told Ḥafṣah, «اتقي الله يا حفصة.» **<Have taqwā of Allāh, O Ḥafṣah.>**¹

She died approximately in 50 H in al-Madīnah and was buried in

¹ Recorded by Aḥmad and at-Tirmithī. Verified to be authentic by Shu'ayb al-Arnā'ūt (*Siyaru A'lām in-Nubalā'* 2:233).

al-Baqīʿ.

Maymūnah Bint al-Ḥārith

Maymūnah Bint ul-Ḥārith Bin Ḥazn al-Hilāliyyah (ﷺ) was the sister of Umm al-Faḍl, the wife of al-ʿAbbās. Thus, she was the aunt of Khālīd Bin al-Walīd and Ibn ʿAbbās (ﷺ).

Before *Islām*, she was married to Masʿūd Bin ʿAmr ath-Thaqafī who later divorced her. She then married Abū Ruḥm Bin ʿAbd il-ʿUzzā. After Abū Ruḥm died, the Prophet (ﷺ) married her in *Thul-qāʿdah* of 7 H, right after he (ﷺ) had completed his *ʿUmrah*.

She was a very noble woman. ʿĀʾishah described her saying:

“By Allāh, Maymūnah is now gone. Indeed, she surely was the most righteous among us, and the kindest toward her relatives.”¹

She died approximately in 50 H, and was buried in Sarif, which is the same Makkan suburb where the Prophet (ﷺ) married her.

Māriyah the Coptic

Māriyah Bint Shamʿūn (ﷺ) was one of the Prophet's (ﷺ) female slaves. Al-Muqawqas, who was the king of Alexandria and Egypt, sent her to him as a gift in 7 H.

She was a Coptic Egyptian of fair complexion. She embraced *Islām* when she reached al-Madīnah. The Prophet (ﷺ) veiled her like his other wives, and she gave birth to his son Ibrāhīm in 8 H. This earned her freedom. Ibrāhīm died when he was two years old.

She died in al-Madīnah in 16 H, during the *khilāfah* of ʿUmar (ﷺ), and was buried in al-Baqīʿ.

¹ Recorded by al-Ḥākim and Ibn Saʿd. Verified to be *ḥasan* by Shuʿayb al-Amāʾūṭ (*Siyaru Aʿlām in-Nubalāʾ* 2:244).

Important Dates

The following table summarizes some important dates concerning the Mothers of the Believers. “Marriage” refers to the year that they got married to the Prophet (ﷺ). It should be noted that many of the following dates are approximate, and the historians considerably differ over some of them. For example, some historians say that Sawdah died in 5 H; others say that she died near the end of ʿUmar's *khilāfah*. We list below the dates that appeared most correct to us.

Important Dates Concerning the Mothers of the Believers

#	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death	Age
1	Khadījah Bint Khuwaylid	68 BH	28 BH	3 BH	65
2	Sawdah Bint Zamʿah	50 BH	2 BH	23 H	73
3	ʿĀʾishah Bint Abī Bakr	8 BH	1 H	57 H	65
4	Zaynab Bint Khuzaymah	26 BH	4 H	4 H	30
5	Umm Salamah	29 BH	4 H	61 H	90
6	Ḥafṣah Bint ʿUmar	18 BH	4 H	41 H	57
7	Zaynab Bint Jaḥsh	33 BH	5 H	20 H	53
8	Juwayriyah Bint al-Ḥārith	14 BH	6 H	56 H	70
9	Umm Ḥabībah Bint Abī Sufyān	24 BH	6 H	42 H	66
10	Ṣafiyyah Bint Ḥuyayy	10 BH	7 H	50 H	60
11	Maymūnah Bint al-Ḥārith	30 BH	7 H	50 H	80
12	Māriyah Bint Shamʿūn, the Coptic (Ibrāhīm's Mother)	10 BH apprx	7 H	16 H	26

Other wives

There were other women that the Prophet (ﷺ) married but did not approach for various reasons. They were:

Al-'Aliyah from the tribe of Bakr Bin Kilāb
 Asmā' Bint Ka'b al-Jawniyyah
 Umm Sharīk from *al-Anṣār*
 Sanā' Bint Asmā' Bin aṣ-Ṣalt as-Sulamiyyah
 Fāṭimah al-Kilābiyyah
 Asmā' Bint an-Nu'mān al-Kindiyyah

As for the second one, 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that when al-Jawniyyah was admitted to the Prophet's (ﷺ) presence and he approached her she said, "*A'ūthu billāhi min* — I ask Allāh to protect me from you." He immediately divorced her saying:

«لقد عذت بعظيم! الحقى بأهلك..»

«Indeed, you have sought protection from the Great One: Go to your family.»¹

Some reports indicate that she regretted this for the rest of her life.

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Ibn Mājah, and others.

CHAPTER 5

WITH THE PROPHET & HIS WIVES

Introduction

The life of the Prophet (ﷺ) with his wives is amazing indeed. It reflects an astounding combination of human nature with prophethood — the human nature taken to sublime levels of compassion and forgiveness, and the prophethood maintaining its supremacy amidst the most striking incidents that could arise between married people.

It also brings to life the personalities of his wives — the Mothers of the Believers. They were real human females who had many of the common characters (not necessarily vices) of females, such as jealousy, conspiracy, and uncontrollable anger.

We have presented in the previous chapter a few incidents that took place between the Prophet (ﷺ) and his wives. In what follows, we present some additional ones — especially those that are particularly longer or included more details. A vast number of lessons can be derived from each the forthcoming narrations. However, we only provide a limited number of comments that we deem necessary for clarifying some obscure incidents or deriving some important morals.

The Prophet's Wives Form Two Teams

The Mothers of the Believers (رضي الله عنهن) formed themselves into two opposing "teams", the first led by 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها), and the other by Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها). The goal of each "team" was attracting (as much as possible) the Prophet's (ﷺ) recognition and love.

TEXT OF THE ḤADĪTH

'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that Allāh's Messenger's (ﷺ) wives were two teams; one team included 'Ā'ishah, Ḥafṣah, Ṣafiyyah, and Sawdah, and the other team included Umm Salamah and the rest of Allāh's

Messenger's (ﷺ) wives¹. Knowing Allāh's Messenger's (ﷺ) superior love of 'Ā'ishah, the Muslims who wanted to give a present to him would delay giving it until he was in 'Ā'ishah's house.

So Umm Salamah's "team" asked her to talk to him and ask him to tell the people to give their presents regardless of which house of his wife's he would be at. When it was her turn with the Prophet (ﷺ), Umm Salamah told him that, but he did not give any response. When she told her "team" about this, they asked her to talk to him again. So she spoke to him when it was her next turn, and he still did not give any response. Her "team" told her, "Keep talking to him until he gives you a response." On her next turn, she again brought that up with him. He (ﷺ) said:

« لا تؤذيني في عائشة، فإن الوحي لم يأتني وأنا في ثوب امرأة، إلا عائشة. »

«Do not hurt me in regard to 'Ā'ishah. Indeed, the revelation did not come to me while I was under any woman's covers except 'Ā'ishah's.»

Umm Salamah said, "I repent to Allāh from doing anything that would hurt you, O Allāh's Messenger."

Umm Salamah's "team" then asked Fāṭimah (رضي الله عنها), Allāh's Messenger's (ﷺ) daughter, to intervene on their behalf. She went to him and said, "Your wives are asking you for justice in regard to the daughter of Abū Bakr." He said, «يا بنية، ألا تحبين ما أحب؟» «O my daughter! Do you not love what I love?» She replied, "Yes!" He pointed to 'Ā'ishah and said, «فأحبي هذا.» «So love this one.» She went back to them and informed them of what happened. They said, "We do not see that you were of any help to us." They wanted her to go again to him, but she refused saying, "By Allāh, I will never speak to him again in her regard."

Finally, they sent Zaynab Bint Jahsh. Raging with anger, Zaynab stormed into 'Ā'ishah's house, where the Prophet (ﷺ) was. She raised her voice saying, "O Allāh's Messenger! Indeed, your wives demand

¹ They were: Umm Salamah, Zaynab Bint Jahsh, Umm Ḥabībah, Juwayriyah, and Maymūnah. As for Zaynab Bint Khuzaymah (رضي الله عنها), she died before Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) married Umm Salamah (see *Faṭḥ ul-Bārī* 5:258).

justice in regard to Ibn Abī Quḥāfah's daughter. Are you only satisfied when she opens her little arms for you (to convince you of what she wants)?" She then turned to 'Ā'ishah and started addressing her with harsh words. The Prophet (ﷺ) tried stopping her, but she went on; and 'Ā'ishah remained silent, waiting for the Prophet's (ﷺ) permission to respond. Finally, he said, «دونك، فانتصري.» «Go ahead — defend yourself!»

'Ā'ishah then responded with full force — leaving Zaynab totally speechless, "Until I saw the saliva dry in her mouth — unable to respond," 'Ā'ishah said.

The Prophet (ﷺ) was pleased with that. He looked at 'Ā'ishah approvingly and said, «إنها بنت أبي بكر.» «Indeed, she is Abū Bakr's daughter!»¹

NOTES

1. The Prophet's (ﷺ) above statement, about the revelation coming to him under 'Ā'ishah's covers, clearly indicates that his favoring of 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) was not haphazard or senseless. It was based on her excellent qualities that singled her out from among all his wives, and that made Jibrīl come under her bed-covers to talk to the Prophet (ﷺ) and bring him the revelation.
2. Our knowledge of Jibrīl's (عليه السلام) modesty allows us to conclude that when he came to the Prophet (ﷺ) under 'Ā'ishah's covers, she must have been decently clothed for his presence.
3. The Prophet's (ﷺ) position in this narration may appear to be unfairly biased toward 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها). However, as we stated earlier, the Prophet's (ﷺ) love for 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) was a divine grant based on her merits and excellence. By no means was it meant to hurt or deprive the other Mothers of the Believers. The Prophet (ﷺ) treated them all equally in material matters. However, in terms of his love and emotion, 'Ā'ishah had the greatest share. Her co-wives, like all other Muslims, were supposed to understand that and appreciate it — not for her sake, but for the sake of their

¹ This is a combined narration recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

love of Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ).

The Prophet's Wives Cooperate Against Him

TEXT OF THE HADĪTH

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) used to visit all of his wives after ‘aṣr prayer, spending a short time closely chatting with each one of them. He (ﷺ) liked honey and sweets. Once a woman from among the relatives of Zaynab Bint Jahsh (رضي الله عنها) gave Zaynab a jar of honey as a present. So she would offer the honey to the Prophet (ﷺ) when he visited her, which would briefly extend the duration of his visit.

When they noticed that, the other wives became jealous. Led by ‘Ā’ishah and Ḥaṣṣah, they decided to put an end to it. “By Allāh, we will scheme something,” ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) said. They agreed that when the Prophet (ﷺ) approached either of them, she would pretend that she was repulsed by a foul odor coming from him, which resembled that of a wild desert plant called *maghāfir*.

Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) hated foul odors. When he went to ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها), she inquired about the foul odor emanating from him. “You must have eaten some *maghāfir*, I can surely smell the odor of *maghāfir* coming from you,” she added. He denied that and said that he only had some honey at Zaynab’s. She said, “The bees must have grazed on *maghāfir* flowers.” When he (ﷺ) went to Ḥaṣṣah (رضي الله عنها), she said the same. The Prophet (ﷺ) believed the story and made an oath never to take of that honey. The next time he went to Zaynab she said, “O Allāh’s Messenger, I will give you some honey.” He replied, “I have no desire for it.” «لا حاجة لي به.»

So Allāh (ﷻ) revealed:

«يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ لِمَ تُحَرِّمُ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكَ، تَتَّبِعِي مَرْضَاتِ أَزْوَاجِكَ،

وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ۖ قَدْ فَرَضَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ تَحِلَّةَ أَيْمَانِكُمْ، وَاللَّهُ

مَوْلَاكُمْ، وَهُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ ۝» التحريم ٢-١

«O Prophet! Why do you prohibit for yourself that which Allāh has made lawful for you, seeking the approval of your wives? Allāh is Forgiving and Merciful. Allāh has already ordained for you the (procedure for) dissolution of your oaths ¹. Allāh is your Protector, and He is the Knowing and Wise.» ²

When Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) made his oath, he confided that to ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها), «شربت عسلاً، ولن أعود له. وقد حلفت، لا تخبري بذلك أحداً.» «I have taken some of that honey, but will never take it anymore. I have also made an oath in that regard, so inform no one about it.» However, ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) did not hold the secret, but informed Ḥaṣṣah about it. Allāh (ﷻ) then revealed that to him, and he reproached ‘Ā’ishah for exposing his secret:

«وَإِذْ أَسَرَّ النَّبِيُّ إِلَى بَعْضِ أَزْوَاجِهِ حَدِيثًا، فَلَمَّا نَبَّأَتْ بِهِ وَأَظْهَرَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ عَرَفَ بَعْضُهُ وَأَعْرَضَ عَنْ بَعْضٍ، فَلَمَّا نَبَّأَهَا بِهِ قَالَتْ: «مَنْ أَنْبَاكَ هَذَا؟» قَالَ: «نَبَّأَنِي الْعَلِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ.» ۝» التحريم ٣

«And (remember) when the Prophet confided to one of his wives a statement; and when she informed (another) of it and Allāh showed that to him, he made known part of it and ignored a part. And when he informed her about it she said, “Who told you this?” He said, “The One Who is Knowing and Acquainted has informed me.» ^{3,4}

DIFFERENT OPINIONS

There is a number of different opinions as to who were the two wives that cooperated against the Prophet (ﷺ), what is the thing that he

1 See *al-Mā'idah* 5:89.

2 *At-Tahrīm* 66:1-2.

3 *At-Tahrīm* 66:3.

4 The above is a combined narration from ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها), recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

prohibited upon himself, and what the secret was that one of them exposed. The following are the most common views found in the books of *tafsīr* and *Ḥadīth*:

1. The two wives were 'Ā'ishah and Ḥafṣah; the thing that the Prophet (ﷺ) prohibited was eating honey at Zaynab's; the secret that he confided to 'Ā'ishah was his oath of prohibiting the honey upon himself; 'Ā'ishah exposed his secret to Ḥafṣah. This opinion is the strongest, and is the one presented above. It is supported by the reports of al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others, and is further supported by 'Umar's statement to Ibn 'Abbās in the next section.

There are other (weaker) reports, similar to the above one, specifying the wife who had the honey as Sawdah or Umm Salamah.¹

2. The wives were three: 'Ā'ishah, Sawdah, and Ṣafīyyah; the thing that the Prophet (ﷺ) prohibited was eating honey at Ḥafṣah's. When the Prophet (ﷺ) prohibited the honey upon himself, Sawdah sympathized with him and said, "*Subhān Allāh* (exalted is Allāh)! By Allāh we have denied him (of the honey)." But 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) hushed her, "Be quiet!"² Some scholars hold the opinion that the narrators have mixed the names of the Mothers of the Believers. Others, such as Ibn Kathīr, see nothing wrong in assuming that both incidents (this and the above one) have truly occurred, but only one of them (the above one) was the cause for revealing the *āyāt*.

3. The two wives were 'Ā'ishah and Ḥafṣah; the thing that the Prophet (ﷺ) prohibited was approaching Māriyah; the secret that he confided to Ḥafṣah was his oath of prohibiting Māriyah upon himself; Ḥafṣah exposed his secret to 'Ā'ishah.

Abū Hurayrah, Ibn 'Umar, Ibn 'Abbās, and Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) once had intercourse with his concubine Māriyah (رضي الله عنها) the mother of his son Ibrāhīm in the house of Ḥafṣah. Ḥafṣah saw them in her house and was upset. She

¹ Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarānī, Ibn Sa'd, and others.

² Recorded by al-Bukhārī (the Book of Divorce).

said, "O Allāh's Messenger! Out of all your wives, you choose to do this in my house, on my bed, and during my day?" She told 'Ā'ishah about that, and the two of them cooperated on urging the Prophet (ﷺ) to prohibit Māriyah. He then promised Ḥafṣah never to approach Māriyah. He made an oath in that regard, and ordered Ḥafṣah not to tell anyone about it, but she told 'Ā'ishah.¹

This could be another authentic cause for the revelation of the above *āyāt*.

4. Except for one difference, this is similar to the previous story. In order to please Ḥafṣah, the Prophet (ﷺ) told her that her father will follow Abū Bakr as his successor, and asked her to keep that secret from 'Ā'ishah, but she told her. This is an unauthentic narration.²

Thus, the first and third opinions are the correct ones as to the cause for the revelation of the first five *āyāt* of *Sūrat ut-Taḥrīm*. The following table summarizes the above discussion:

Cooperating wives	Prohibited thing	Exposed Secret	Degree
'Ā'ishah & Ḥafṣah	Zaynab's honey	Oath never to eat from it	Strongest
'Ā'ishah, Sawdah & Ṣafīyyah	Ḥafṣah's honey	Oath never to eat from it	Strong

¹ Recorded by an-Nasā'ī, Ibn Mardawayh, and others. An-Nasā'ī's report from Anas is verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ un-Nasā'ī* no. 3695). Ibn Kathīr indicated (in his *Tafsīr*) that al-Haytham Bin Kulayb's report from Ibn 'Umar is authentic. Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Hajar indicated (in *Fath ul-Bārī*) that the various *isnāds* of this *ḥadīth* strengthen each other, and mentioned another narration recorded by Sa'īd Bin Manṣūr with an authentic *isnād* to Masrūq (who is a *ṭabī'ī*), without mentioning a *ṣaḥābī* (i.e., *mursal*).

² Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarānī (in *al-Kabīr*) from Ibn 'Abbās. Verified to be weak by Ibn Kathīr (in his *Tafsīr*).

Cooperating wives	Prohibited thing	Exposed Secret	Degree
'Ā'ishah & Ḥafṣah	Approaching Māriyah	Oath never to approach her	Strong
'Ā'ishah & Ḥafṣah	Approaching Māriyah	The successorship of Abū Bakr & 'Umar	Weak

The Prophet Deserts His Wives for One Month

TEXT OF THE ḤADĪTH

Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported that for a whole year he wanted to ask 'Umar Bin al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه) about an *āyah*, but could not do that because of the feeling of awe that he had toward him. At one point, 'Umar went out for Ḥajj, and he accompanied him. Along their return trip, they stopped for rest. 'Umar went toward some *arāk*¹ bushes for a need of his, and Ibn 'Abbās waited for him with a pitcher of water. After he finished and came back, Ibn 'Abbās poured water for 'Umar, and he performed *wuḍū'*. Then he walked with him and said, "O Commander of the Believers! Who were the two of Allāh's Messenger's (ﷺ) wives who cooperated against him?"² He replied, "They were Ḥafṣah and 'Ā'ishah. That was because of the secret that he entrusted to Ḥafṣah and she disclosed to 'Ā'ishah, which resulted in his anger and decision to desert them — until Allāh admonished him."

Ibn 'Abbās said, "By Allāh, I have wanted to ask you about this for a whole year, but could not because of my feeling of respect toward you." 'Umar said, "Do not do that. If you expect that I have knowledge about a matter, ask me. If I know, I will tell you." Then 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) told him the following:

"By Allāh, during the time of *Jāhiliyyah*, we did not give any importance to women, until Allāh revealed in

¹ A desert tree from which the *miswāks* are made.

² He is referring to what is mentioned in *Surat ut-Tahrīm* (66:1-5).

their regard what He revealed, and allocated for them what He did. And we, the Quraysh people, used to overcome our women, and did not allow them to interfere in our affairs. When we came to al-Madīnah, we found that the *Anṣār*'s women overcame them. So our women started learning some of the manners of the *Anṣār*'s women.

One day I was doing something, and my wife argued with me and suggested, 'Why don't you do such and such?' I said, 'And what have you to do with this; and why do you interfere in my decisions?' She responded, 'I am amazed at you, O Son of al-Khaṭṭāb! You do not want to be questioned! By Allāh, the Prophet's (ﷺ) wives surely argue with him, and would sometimes desert him the whole day until the evening! And even your daughter surely argues with Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) until she makes him angry for the rest of the day!' This shocked me, and I said, 'Anyone of them who does this is indeed a loser!'

I then immediately wrapped myself in my garments and went to Ḥafṣah's house and said, 'O my daughter, indeed, do you argue with Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) until he becomes angry for the rest of the day?' Ḥafṣah replied, 'Yes indeed, by Allāh, we do argue with him!' I said, 'Indeed, you must understand, you are lost and ruined (by that)! Do you feel secure of Allāh's anger and punishment when you disturb His Messenger? Daughter, do not argue with the Prophet (ﷺ) about anything, nor desert him, nor ask him too much — but ask me whatever you wish. And do not be misled by your co-wife who is prettier than you and more beloved by Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) ¹.'

Then I left and went to Umm Salamah, to whom I am closely related, and spoke similarly to her. She replied, 'I am amazed at you, O Son of al-Khaṭṭāb! You want to interfere in everything — even between

¹ He refers to 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها).

Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) and his wives! Yes, by Allāh, we argue with him. If he allows that, he does not mind it; and if he forbids it, he would still be more lenient to us than you.' When she said that, she cooled some of my anger, and I left."

'Umar (رضي الله عنه) continued:

"My house was among the dwellings of the tribe of Umayyah Bin Zayd in the district of al-'Awālī (al-Madīnah's heights). I had a neighbor from that tribe of al-Anṣār. We used to take turns going to the Prophet (ﷺ) — He would go one day and I the other day. When I went, I would tell him of what happened on that day, of revelations or other things; and when he went, he would do the same.

There were rumors at that time that the Ghassān¹ tribe was preparing their horses to attack us, and our breasts were filled with anxiety because of this. My neighbor went on the day that was his turn. In the evening, he came pounding hard on our door, yelling, 'Is he there?' I was terrified, and rushed out to him. He said, 'A very grave incident took place today!' I asked, 'What is it? Has the Ghassān attacked us?' He replied, 'No, it is even more grave and horrible. The Prophet (ﷺ) divorced his wives!' I said, 'Ḥaṣṣah and 'Ā'ishah are then truly lost and ruined! I was expecting this to happen sooner or later.'

In the morning, I wrapped myself in my garments and went to pray the *fajr* prayer with the Prophet (ﷺ). After the prayer, the Prophet (ﷺ) entered into a room that he had above the *Masjid*'s level, with a (steep) stair made from a palm tree's trunk leading up to it. He stayed there in seclusion.

I went out (into the *Masjid*) and walked toward the

¹ A large Arabian tribe who mostly embraced Christianity and was supported by the Romans.

minbar. I found around it a group of men sitting and (regretfully) playing with the pebbles, some of them weeping and exclaiming, 'Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) has divorced his women!' I sat with them for a short while, and thought to myself, 'Today, I will find the truth in this regard.'

This happened prior to the command of *ḥijāb* that came to the Prophet's wives¹. Feeling overwhelmed by emotion, I went to 'Ā'ishah's house and said, 'O daughter of Abū Bakr! Has your position reached to that you would hurt Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ)?' She replied, 'What have you to do with me, O son of al-Khaṭṭāb! Go deal with your own shame (i.e., your daughter).' I went into Ḥaṣṣah's house and found her weeping. I said, 'O Ḥaṣṣah! What makes you weep? Haven't I warned you of this? Has your position reached to that you would hurt Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ)? You know that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) does not like you; and had it not been for me he would have divorced you.' She started weeping very hard. I asked, 'Did the Prophet (ﷺ) divorce all of you?' She replied, 'I do not know. There he is secluding himself in that loft.'

I stood beneath the Prophet's (ﷺ) loft. A black youth called Rabāḥ was guarding the door, sitting on the doorstep with his legs dangling down to the palm stair. I said to him, 'Seek permission for 'Umar.' He went in, spoke to the Prophet (ﷺ), and came back saying, 'I spoke to the Prophet (ﷺ) and mentioned your request, but he remained silent.' So I went back and sat with the group who were by the *minbar*. I was again overwhelmed by emotion, so I went to the youth and said, 'Seek permission for 'Umar.' He went in and came back saying, 'I spoke to him and mentioned your request, but he remained silent.' So I went back and sat with the group by the *minbar*. I was again overwhelmed by emotion, so I went to the youth and raised my voice

¹ See *al-Aḥzāb* 53 and 59.

saying, 'O Rabāḥ! Seek permission for 'Umar. Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) may think that I came for the sake of Ḥafṣah; but by Allāh, if Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) commands me to chop her head off, I will.' He motioned me to lower my voice, went in, and came back saying, 'I spoke to him and mentioned your request, but he remained silent.' As I started moving away, the youth called me and said, 'The Prophet (ﷺ) has given you permission to enter.'

I entered into the Prophet's (ﷺ) presence and found him lying on a straw mat — the straws leaving marks on his side. He was reclining on a leather pillow filled with luffa (rough fiberish plant). Still standing up, I gave him *Salām* and said, 'O Allāh's Messenger! Why should you be upset about women? If you have divorced them, then Allāh is on your side, and His angels, and Jibrīl and Mikā'il, and I and Abū Bakr and the believers are on your side as well.' And rarely did I say a statement — praise be to Allāh — but hoped that Allāh would confirm my statement. So Allāh revealed:

﴿إِنْ تَتُوبَا إِلَى اللَّهِ فَقَدْ صَغَتْ قُلُوبُكُمَا، وَإِنْ تَظَاهَرَا عَلَيْهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ مَوْلَاهُ، وَجِبْرِيلُ، وَصَالِحُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ ظَهِيرٌ ۝﴾ التحريم ٤

«If you two (Ā'ishah and Ḥafṣah) repent to Allāh, (it is best), for your hearts have deviated. But if you cooperate against him — then indeed Allāh is his protector, and Jibrīl and the righteous of the believers and the angels, moreover, are his supporters.»¹

And He (ﷺ) revealed:

¹ At-Tahrīm 66:4.

﴿عَسَى رَبُّهُ إِنْ طَلَّقَكُنْ أَنْ يُبَدِّلَهُ أَزْوَاجًا خَيْرًا مِنْكُنْ، مُسْلِمَتٍ،
مُؤْمِنَتٍ قَانِتَةٍ، تَتَّبِعْتِ، عِبْدَاتٍ، سَخِيحَتِ، ثِيَابُكِ وَأَبْكَارًا ۝﴾
التحريم ٥

«Perhaps his Lord, if he divorced you (all), would substitute for him wives better than you — submitting (to Allāh), believing, devoutly obedient (to Allāh), repentant (o Allāh), worshipping (Allāh), and migrating (for Allāh's cause) — non-virgins and virgins.»¹

Then I asked him, 'O Allāh's Messenger! Have you divorced your wives?' He replied, «لا.» «No!» I said, 'Allāhu Akbar! O Allāh's Messenger, when I entered into the *Masjid* I saw the Muslims (regretfully) playing with the pebbles and exclaiming that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) has divorced his wives. Should I go down and inform them that you did not?' He replied, «نعم، إن شئت.» «Yes, if you wish.» So I rushed to the door leading to the *Masjid* and shouted as loud as I could, 'The Prophet (ﷺ) did not divorce his wives!' Also, the following *ayah* was revealed:

﴿وَإِذَا جَاءَهُمْ أَمْرٌ مِنَ الْأَمْنِ أَوْ الْخَوْفِ أَذَاعُوا بِهِ، وَلَوْ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ وَإِلَى أُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ لَعَلِمَهُ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَنْبِطُونَهُ مِنْهُمْ. وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَاتَّبَعْتُمُ الشَّيْطَانَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ۝﴾

النساء ٨٣

«And when there comes to them some information concerning security or fear, they spread it around. But if they had referred it back to the Messenger or to those of authority among them, then the ones who

¹ At-Tahrīm 66:5.

can draw correct conclusions from it would have known it. And had it not been for Allāh's favor and mercy upon you, you would have followed Satan — except for a few (among you).»¹

And I was the one who was able to draw that correct answer.

Still standing, I tried to cheer the Prophet (ﷺ), 'O Allāh's Messenger! You should see how we, the Quraysh people, used to overcome our women. But when we came to al-Madīnah we found a people whose women overcame them. So our women started learning from their women. One day I became angry with my wife, and she started arguing with me. I disapproved of that. Her response was that, by Allāh, the Prophet's (ﷺ) wives surely argue with him, and would sometimes desert him a whole day until the evening! I then went and said to them, "Anyone of you who does that is indeed a ruined loser! How can any of you have security from Allāh's wrath when she disturbs His Messenger? That could surely bring her destruction." The Prophet (ﷺ) smiled showing his teeth — and his smile was among the best of the people's. Then I said, 'O Allāh's Messenger! You should have seen me when I went to Ḥafṣah and said, "Do not be conceited because of your co-wife who is prettier and more beloved to the Prophet (ﷺ)." ' The Prophet (ﷺ) smiled a second time.

When I saw that, I sought his permission to sit and continue talking to him. He said, «نعم» «Yes!» I sat down and raised my eyes examining the contents of his dwelling. I only saw three half-tinted pieces of leather, and a handful of barley in a corner. I cried, and he asked me, «ما يبكيك يا ابن الخطاب؟» «O Son of al-Khaṭṭāb! What makes you cry?» I said, 'How can I not cry when I see this mat leaving marks on your side, and

¹ An-Nisā' 4:83.

your room as empty as it is? Why do Kisrā and Qaysar (Caesar) enjoy rivers and fruits while you, Allāh's Messenger and His chosen one from among His creation, are in this tight living? O Allāh's Messenger! Supplicate to Allāh to ease the living of your *Ummah*, for the Persians and Romans have indeed been given ease of living and have been given the possessions of the worldly life, even though they do not worship Allāh.'

The Prophet (ﷺ) sat up from his recline and said:

«أوفي هذا أنت؟ أفي شك أنت يا ابن الخطاب؟ إن أولئك

قومٌ عجلوا (أو عجلت لهم) طيباتهم في الحياة الدنيا.»

«Is this what concerns you? Do you have any doubt (about Allāh's promises), O Son of al-Khaṭṭāb? Those people have received their pleasure too soon — in this worldly life.»

I said, 'O Allāh's Messenger! Ask Allāh to forgive me.'

Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) then descended from the loft and I followed him. Whereas I was carefully holding to the palm trunk, Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) descended (elegantly) as if he was walking on a flat surface, and without even touching the trunk.

Thus, Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) abandoned his wives and remained in his seclusion for twenty-nine nights. He had vowed to desert them for a full month, saying, «ما أنا بداخل شهراً.» «I will not approach them for a full month.» I asked him about that, 'O Allāh's Messenger, you remained in the loft only for twenty-nine nights.' He replied, «إن الشهر يكون تسعة وعشرين يوماً.» «A month can be twenty-nine days.»¹

¹ This is a combined report recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

NOTES

In the above narration, Ibn 'Abbās asked 'Umar about the two women who cooperated against the Prophet (ﷺ). He clearly indicated that they were Ḥafṣah and 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها). Then 'Umar went on to mention another incident that led the Prophet (ﷺ) to desert his wives for a full month.

Thus it should be understood that 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) mentioned two different incidents.¹ He intertwined them because they had something in common: they both represented misbehavior by the Prophet's (ﷺ) wives toward him, and both resulted in revelations defending the Prophet (ﷺ) and reproaching the Mothers of the Believers. The second incident will be further detailed in the next section.

A Difficult Choice?

Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) chose to live a modest life, reserving his pleasures to the Hereafter. This is indicated in his words to 'Umar in the previous section. It seems that he (ﷺ) saw signs of discontent from his wives, and that greatly distressed him.

TEXT OF THE ḤADĪTH

Jābir Bin 'Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) reported that Abū Bakr went to the Prophet's (ﷺ) house and sought permission to enter. There were many people sitting outside, none of them permitted to enter. Abū Bakr was admitted. 'Umar then came, sought permission to enter, and was admitted. They found the Prophet (ﷺ) sitting in silence, with his wives around him. Abū Bakr decided to say something to cheer the Prophet (ﷺ), so he said, "O Allāh's Messenger! You should have seen when Bint Khārijah asked me for (additional) support: I was about to strike her neck."² Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) then smiled and said:

¹ See *Fath ul-Qadīr* by ash-Shawkānī.

² This expression is not always meant literally, but is often used to express a mere threat for misbehavior.

«هن حولي كما ترى، يسألنني النفقة.»

«Here they are — as you can see — around me, asking me for (additional) support.»

So Abū Bakr jumped at 'Ā'ishah to beat her, and 'Umar jumped at Ḥafṣah, both of them saying, "How dare you ask Allāh's Messenger for that which he cannot afford?" They replied, "By Allāh, we are not asking Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) for anything that he cannot afford."

Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) then deserted his wives for a month (or twenty nine days), and Allāh (ﷻ) revealed:

«يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لَأَزْوَاجِكُمْ: "إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُرِيدْنَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتَهَا فَتَعَالَيْنَ أُمَتِّعْكُنَّ وَأُسَرِّحْكُنَّ سَرَاحًا جَمِيلًا" وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُرِيدْنَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالْدارَ الْآخِرَةَ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ أَعَدَّ لِلْمُحْسِنَاتِ مِنْكُنَّ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا." ﴿٢٨﴾ الأحزاب ٢٩-٢٨

«O Prophet! Say to your wives, "If you should desire the worldly life and its adornment, then come, I will provide for you and give you a gracious release. But if you should desire Allāh and His Messenger and the home of the Hereafter — then indeed, Allāh has prepared for the doers of good among you a great reward.»¹

The Prophet (ﷺ) started by 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) and said:

«يا عائشة، إني أريد أن أعرض عليك أمراً أحب ألا تعجلي فيه حتى تستشيري أبويك.»

«O 'Ā'ishah! I want to propose something to you, and would like you not to hasten in your decision until you consult with your parents.»

¹ Al-Ahzāb 33:28-29.

She asked, "What is it, O Allāh's Messenger?" And he recited to her the above two *āyāt*. She said:

"Do I need to consult my parents in regard to you, O Allāh's Messenger!? I surely choose Allāh, His Messenger, and the home of the Hereafter. I further request you not to tell any of your other wives about what I just said."

He replied:

«لا تسألني امرأةً منهن إلا أخبرتها. إن الله لم يبعثني معنتاً ولا متعنتاً، ولكن بعثني معلماً ميسراً.»

«No woman among them would ask me but I will tell her. Indeed, Allāh did not send me as one who makes things hard for himself or others. Rather, He sent me as a teacher who facilitates things.»

All of the other wives made the same choice as 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها), and that pleased Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ).¹

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

THE ḤADĪTH ABOUT UMM ZAR'

Chatting with One's Spouse

The following *ḥadīth* is the outcome of a chatting that took place between the Prophet (ﷺ) and his wife 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها). It is a good example of the private discussions that take place between a man and his wife. It tells about eleven women who got together, each of them briefly describing her husband's character to the other women.

Most reports of this *ḥadīth* present the story of the eleven women as being narrated by 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) and not by the Prophet (ﷺ). However, some reports explicitly indicate that it was the Prophet (ﷺ) who told it to her.¹

Also, some scholars hold the position that the whole story is fictitious and was mentioned for the sake of the lessons that it carries. Others hold the more correct position that it is a true story that did take place during the time of *Jāhiliyyah*. This is explicitly mentioned in some of the reports, such as the one presented below.

'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said to her:

«يا عائشة، كنتُ لك كَأبي زرعٍ لَأُمِّ زرعٍ.»

«O 'Ā'ishah! I am to you like Abū Zar' was to Umm Zar'.»²

She inquired, "And who is Umm Zar', O Allāh's Messenger?" He replied:

«اجتمع إحدى عشرة امرأةً في الجاهلية، فتعاقدن أن يتصادقن

¹ See the discussion in *Fath ul-Bārī* no. 5189.

² Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

بينهن، ولا يكتُمْن من أخبار أزواجهن شيئاً.»

«Eleven women got together during the times of *Jāhiliyyah*. They promised to tell each other the truth, and not to hide anything about their husbands.»

It is clear that those women were not Muslim, and it is therefore not surprising that they would violate some of the well-known teachings of *Islām*, such as backbiting their husbands. Yet, their discussions bring to light many qualities that women like or dislike in their husbands.

Disliked Qualities

The first few women said about their husbands things indicating their dissatisfaction with them.

MISERLINESS AND ARROGANCE

The first woman described her husband as being worthless, stingy, and arrogant:

«فَقَالَتِ الْأُولَى: "زَوْجِي لَحْمٌ جُمْلٍ غَثٌّ، عَلَى رَأْسِ جَبَلٍ وَعَرٍ، لَا سَهْلَ فَيُرْتَقَى، وَلَا سَمِينٌ فَيُنْتَقَل."»

«The first woman said, "My husband is (like) a bony camel's meat at the top of a rough mountain. Neither is it easy to reach, nor meaty to desire acquiring.»

Thus, he is as worthless and miserly as a bony camel with very little meat, hence of trivial value. Furthermore, he is haughty, unfriendly, and unapproachable, as though he is located at the top of a rough mountain. No one would be interested in going to him, nor bringing him for any kind of benefit.

NUMEROUS APPARENT AND HIDDEN PROBLEMS

The second woman indicated that her husband possessed numerous defects — both apparent and hidden:

«قَالَتِ الثَّانِيَةُ: "زَوْجِي لَا أَبْثُ خَبْرَهُ، إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ لَا أَذَرَهُ. إِنْ أَذْكُرُهُ، أَذْكَرُ عَجْرَهُ وَبُجْرَهُ."»

«The second woman said, "As for my husband, I cannot expose his secrets (fearing divorce). (If I start talking about him,) I fear that I will not be able to stop (because of his numerous shortcomings). And if I were to talk about him, I would mention the swelling in his neck-veins (i.e., arrogance, unfriendliness, and other apparent defects) and the swelling in his stomach and navel (i.e., many hidden defects).»

In addition to his numerous defects, this man did not like criticism, and was ready to divorce his wife would she utter anything about his problems.

EXCESSIVENESS AND UNIMPRESSIVENESS

The third woman described her husband as being unimpressively out of proportion in his qualities (bodily, morally, or both):

«قَالَتِ الثَّالِثَةُ: "زَوْجِي الْعَشَنَقُ. إِنْ أَنْطِقَ أُطْلَقُ، وَإِنْ أَسْكُتُ أُعْلَقُ."»

«The third woman said, "My husband is the one who is unreasonably tall (i.e., unimpressive). If I utter a word (about his defects, and he finds out), I will surely be divorced. And if I remain silent, I will be suspended (i.e., he neither treats me like a wife nor like a divorcee).»

SELFISHNESS, GREED, AND NEGLIGENCE

The fourth woman described her husband as being very greedy. He eats and drink, to the last bit, everything in front of him. He sleeps like a log, without caring about her, fulfilling his marital duty toward her, or investigating her situation and checking about her health:

«قالت الرابعة: "زوجي إن أكلَ لَفًّا، وإن شربَ أَشْتَفًّا،

وإن أضطَجَعَ أَلْتَفًّا. ولا يُولِجُ الكَفَّ، لِيَعْلَمَ الْبَثَّ."»

«The fourth woman said, "As for my husband, when he eats he encompasses (i.e., devours everything); when he drinks he finishes even the last drops; and when he sleeps he coils up in the covers (i.e., not caring about me). He does not extend his palm to investigate the grief (i.e., he does not have any concern about my situations of illness, sorrow, and so on).»

HELPLESSNESS, STUPIDITY, AND ABUSE

The fifth woman's husband lacks all of the important qualities that would make a woman admire her husband:

«قالت الخامسة: "زوجي عَيَّيَاءُ، طَبَّاقَاءُ، كُلُّ دَاءٍ لَهُ دَاءٌ.

شَجَّكَ، أَوْ قَلَّكَ، أَوْ جَمَعَ كُلًّا لَكَ."»

«The fifth woman said, "My husband is extremely helpless (i.e., incapable and impotent) and stupid. Every disease applies to him. He would either cut your head, break one of your limbs, or do both to you (i.e., he hits the women without mercy).»

He is helpless in conducting his and his family's affairs, impotent and unable to please his wife, and stupid. All of the people's defects are combined in him. And, as though that is not enough, he is very abusive towards his wife. He hits her without mercy, breaking her

bones or wounding her head.

Commendable Qualities

The next five women had good things to say about their husbands.

KINDNESS, SECURITY, AND CARING

The sixth woman's husband is like a cool night breeze:

«قالت السادسة: "زوجي كَلِيلٌ تِهَامَةٍ، لا حَرَّ ولا قَرَّ،

ولا خَافَةٌ ولا سَامَةٌ."»

«The sixth woman said, "As for my husband, he is like the night of Tihāmah (Makkah and its suburbs) — neither hot nor cold. (In his company) there is neither fear nor boredom.»

He is kind and moderate in his actions, and his company does not bring fear or boredom. Rather, it gives her a feeling of security and friendliness.

LOVE, GENEROSITY, AND COURAGE

The seventh woman's husband is well mannered and loving at home, and courageous and powerful outside his home:

«قالت السابعة: "زوجي إن دَخَلَ فُهْدًا، وإن خَرَجَ أُسْدًا،

ولا يَسْأَلُ عَمَّا عَهِدَ."»

«The seventh woman said, "As for my husband, when he enters, he acts like a (sleepy) leopard; and when he leaves, he acts like a lion. He does not ask about what he entrusted.»

Within the house, he is like a leopard: quiet, sleepy (i.e., forgiving),

and loving. In dealing with the outside society, he is like a lion: courageous, powerful, and respected. When he entrusts his wife (or others) with something, he does not hold her strictly accountable for it; rather, he is generous and willing to overlook the mistakes.

GOOD REPUTATION, RESPECT, AND KINDNESS

The eighth woman's husband is very kind to her. At the same time, he is strong and assertive with other people:

«قالت الثامنة: "زوجي: المسُّ مَسُّ أَرْتَب، والريحُ رِيحُ زَرْتَب،
وأنا أَغْلِبُهُ، والناسُ يَغْلِبُ."»

«The eighth woman said, "As for my husband, his touch is like that of a rabbit, and his odor is like that of *zarnab* (aromatic plant). I overcome him, but he overcomes the other people.»

With his wife, he has the soft and kind touch of a rabbit, and he has a most pleasant odor.

With other people, he has a good reputation (another meaning for the good odor), and his kindness and good attitude with his wife do not prevent him from being powerful and victorious with the other people.

WEALTH, COURAGE, GENEROSITY, AND STATURE

The ninth woman's husband is of a noble and wealthy family. He is a strong warrior and a generous host:

«قالت التاسعة: "زوجي رَفِيعُ الْعِمَادِ، طَوِيلُ النَّجَادِ،
عَظِيمُ الرَّمَادِ، قَرِيبُ الْبَيْتِ مِنَ النَّادِ."»

«The ninth woman said, "As for my husband, he has high house-pillars, long sword-suspenders, and large amounts of ashes. His house is near the clubhouse.»

The high house-pillars are an indication of his noble descent and

wealth. The long sword-suspenders indicate that he is of large and impressive built and that he is a strong fighter. The ashes are an indication of his generosity and his many guests. Being in the vicinity of the clubhouse indicates that he is near the town-center where important people usually live and meet.

WEALTH, GENEROSITY, AND OTHER DISTINGUISHED QUALITIES

The tenth woman's husband has many excellent qualities that are beyond description:

«قالت العاشرة: "زوجي مالك، وما مالك؟ مالكٌ خَيْرٌ مِنْ ذَلِكَ.
لَهُ إِبِلٌ كَثِيرَاتُ الْمَبَارِكِ، قَلِيلَاتُ الْمَسَارِحِ؛ إِذَا سَمِعْنَ صَوْتَ
الْمَزَاهِرِ أَيقَنَ أَنَّهُنَّ هَوَالِكُ."»

«The tenth woman said, "My husband is Mālik (the owner). And what would you know about Mālik? Mālik is better than that (which I describe). He owns camels that are numerous in their sitting places, and few in the grazing areas. When they hear the sound of the lute, they become certain of their death.»

This means that she is never able to give her husband the praise that he truly deserves. His camels, numerous though they are, are not allowed to graze far away from his residence, because he wants them ever-ready for his guests. He often holds banquets in which he entertains his guests with the lute and feeds them camel-meat.

Umm Zar' and Her Two Husbands

The last woman to speak was Umm Zar'. She gave a fuller description of her two husbands: Abū Zar' and the man whom she married after Abū Zar' divorced her. Both of her husbands were good to her, but she was happier with the first, and gave a more detailed description of him and his family members.

ABŪ ZAR'S KINDNESS, WEALTH, AND GENEROSITY

Abū Zar' took Umm Zar' from a life of poverty and hard work to a life of wealth and leisure:

«قالت الحادية عشرة: "زَوْجِي أَبُو زَرْعٍ، وَمَا أَبُو زَرْعٍ؟ أَنَا مِنْ حُلِيِّ أَذُنِي، وَمَلَأَ مِنْ شَحْمِ عَضُدِي، وَبَجَحَنِي، فَبَجَحَتُ إِلَيَّ نَفْسِي. وَجَدَنِي فِي أَهْلِ غَنِيمَةٍ بِشَقٍّ، فَجَعَلَنِي فِي أَهْلِ صَهِيلٍ وَأَطِيطٍ وَدَائِسٍ وَمُنَقٍّ، فَعِنْدَهُ أَقُولُ فَلَا أَقْبَحُ، وَأَرْقُدُ فَأَتَصَبَّحُ، وَأَشْرَبُ فَأَتَقَمَّحُ."»

«The eleventh said, "My husband was Abū Zar' (i.e., the one with vegetation) — and what would you know about Abū Zar'? He made my ears heavy with jewelry, filled my upper arms with flesh (i.e., fed me well after my previous state of hunger), and honored me until my soul was gratified. He took me from among a people with very few sheep and tight living, and placed me among a people who had horses, camels, cows (that step on the grains to peel them), and sieves (for sifting the grains). In his house, I spoke without being rebuffed, slept until late-morning, and drank my fill."»

ABŪ ZAR'S MOTHER

Abū Zar's mother was a wealthy woman with ample provisions and many servants. This carries an additional praise for her son, because he made sure that his mother's needs were well met, and her living was no less than his:

"أُمُّ أَبِي زَرْعٍ، وَمَا أُمُّ أَبِي زَرْعٍ؟ عَكُومُهَا رَدَاخٌ، وَيَيْتُهَا فَسَاخٌ."

«(She continued,) "Abū Zar's mother — and what would you know about Abū Zar's mother! Her

safes (of food and clothing) were plentiful, and her house was spacious."»

ABŪ ZAR'S SON

Despite his father's wealth, Abū Zar's son was not a spoiled young man. To the contrary, he was lean, content, ate moderately, and was ever alert, even while sleeping:

"ابْنُ أَبِي زَرْعٍ، وَمَا ابْنُ أَبِي زَرْعٍ؟ مَضْجَعُهُ كَمَسَلٍ شَطْبَةٍ، وَثَشْبَعُهُ ذِرَاعُ الْجَفْرَةِ."

«(She continued,) "Abū Zar's son — and what would you know about Abū Zar's son! His sleep was (sharp) like a pointed palm stick (i.e., ever-alert), and a female goat's arm satisfied his hunger (i.e., neither was he fat nor greedy)."»

ABŪ ZAR'S DAUGHTER

Abū Zar's daughter was a perfect young woman, obedient to both her parents, beautiful, and attractive. This graced her family, and brought envy to her co-wife:

"بِنْتُ أَبِي زَرْعٍ، وَمَا بِنْتُ أَبِي زَرْعٍ؟ طَوْعُ أَبِيهَا، وَطَوْعُ أُمِّهَا، وَمِلُّ كِسَائِهَا، وَعَطْفُ رَدَائِهَا، وَزَيْنُ أَهْلِهَا، وَغَيْظُ جَارَتِهَا."

«(She continued,) "Abū Zar's daughter — and what would you know about Abū Zar's daughter! She was obedient to her father and obedient to her mother. She filled her garments (i.e., her body was full). She caused her upper garment to curve (her body was well-proportioned). She was the grace of her family, and the cause of envy to her co-wife."»

ABŪ ZAR'S MAID

Even the maid played a role in painting an impressive picture of dignity and praise for Abū Zar! She was trustworthy, protective, and clean:

”جَارِيَةُ أَبِي زَرْعٍ، وَمَا جَارِيَةُ أَبِي زَرْعٍ؟ لَا تَبُثُّ حَدِيثَنَا تَبْثِيشًا،
وَلَا تَنْفُثُ مِيرَتَنَا تَنْقِيشًا، وَلَا تَمْلَأُ بَيْتَنَا نَعْشِيشًا.”

«(She continued,) “Abū Zar’s maid — and what would you know about Abū Zar’s maid! She did not disclose our secrets, nor give away our food (i.e., she was trustworthy), nor let our house fill with dirt like a bird’s nest (i.e., she was clean).”»

THE UNFORTUNATE OCCURRENCE

After spending many years with her, Abū Zar’ decided one day to give up his wife Umm Zar’ for a younger woman who had two young boys:

”خَرَجَ أَبُو زَرْعٍ وَالْأَوْطَابُ تُمَخَضُ، فَمَرَّ بِأَمْرَأَةٍ مَعَهَا ابْنَانِ لَهَا
كَالْفَهْدَيْنِ، يَلْعَبَانِ مِنْ تَحْتِ خَصْرِهَا بِرُمَانَتَيْنِ، فَطَلَّقْنِي، وَنَكَحَهَا.”

«(She continued,) “Abū Zar’ went on a trip at the time when the milk jars were shaken to extract the cream (i.e., in the spring when there was plenty of milk). He met a woman with two little sons as (active as) two leopard cubs. They were (jumping) under her waist and playing with two pomegranates (i.e., she was young and had small breasts). He divorced me and married her.”»

THE SECOND HUSBAND

Umm Zar’s second husband was also wealthy and very good to her. But her heart remained with her first husband:

”فَتَنَكَّحْتُ بَعْدَهُ رَجُلًا سَرِيًّا، رَكِيبَ سَرِيًّا، وَأَخَذَ خَطِيًّا، وَأَرَاخَ
عَلَيَّ نَعْمًا ثَرِيًّا، وَأَعْطَانِي مِنْ كُلِّ رَائِحَةِ زَوْجًا، وَقَالَ: ”كُلِّي أُمَّ
زَرْعٍ، وَمِيرِي أَهْلَكَ.“ فَلَوْ جَمَعْتُ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَعْطَانِيهِ، مَا مَلَأُ
أَصْغَرَ إِنَاءٍ مِنْ آيَةِ أَبِي زَرْعٍ.”

«(She continued,) “I married after him a noble man. He rode a fast horse and grasped a spear (he was a fighter). He brought to me in the evenings (after his battles) expensive cattle, and granted me a pair from every kind of it. He said to me, ‘Eat, O Umm Zar’, and give your relatives as well.’ Yet, were I to gather all the things that he gave me, they would not fill the smallest of Abū Zar’s containers.”»

Conclusion

Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) concluded by again telling ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) that he was to her like Abū Zar’ was to Umm Zar’.

”يَا عَائِشَةُ، كُنْتُ لَكَ كَأَبِي زَرْعٍ لَأُمِّ زَرْعٍ،
إِلَّا أَنَّ أَبَا زَرْعٍ طَلَّقَ، وَأَنَا لَا أُطَلِّقُ.”

«O ‘Ā’ishah! I am to you like Abū Zar’ was to Umm Zar’ — except that Abū Zar’ divorced (her), and I will not divorce (you).»¹

This means that he was bountiful towards her like Abū Zar’ was towards Umm Zar’. However, the Prophet’s (ﷺ) favors on ‘Ā’ishah (or any other Muslim) are beyond measure, and they extend to the good and eternal bliss of the Hereafter. This is why ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) responded:

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

“O Allāh’s Messenger! You are better to me than Abū Zar’ was to Umm Zar’.”¹

1 Recorded by at-Ṭabarānī.

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ARABIC TERMS

A number of Arabic terms are frequently used in *Islāmic* discussions, and seem to constitute a basic vocabulary that needs to be available to the readers of most books on *Islām*. We attempt to provide such terms, together with their definitions, in the following “Glossary” section. Other terms pertinent to the current book are included in the “Index” section, together with a page-reference indicating where they are defined in this book.

A: Glossary of Common Terms

Term	Definition
<i>Al-Fātiḥah</i>	The first chapter of the <i>Qur’ān</i> .
<i>Āmīn</i>	Means, “O Allāh, answer my supplication.”
<i>Anṣār</i>	“The Supporters”: the residents of al-Madīnah who supported the Prophet (ﷺ) and the <i>Muhājirūn</i> .
<i>Athān</i>	Call to the prayer.
<i>Āyah</i>	A <i>Qur’ānic</i> phrase approximately equal to one sentence, but sometimes longer or shorter than that; plural: <i>āyāt</i> .
<i>Āyāt</i>	Plural of <i>āyah</i> .
<i>Bid‘ah</i>	Innovation in the creed or in acts of worship.
<i>Da‘wah</i>	Call or mission.
<i>Dīn</i>	Religion. It is usually used in reference to the religion of <i>Islām</i> .
<i>Dīnār</i>	A valuable old currency that was made of gold.

Term	Definition
<i>Dirham</i>	A low-value old currency that was made of silver or copper.
<i>Du'ā</i>	Supplication.
<i>Fajr</i>	Dawn. It usually applies to the first daily obligatory prayer, whose time extends from dawn until sunrise.
<i>Fard</i>	Obligation.
<i>Fard Kifāyah</i>	A communal obligation; if some Muslims perform it, the obligation is considered fulfilled by all; and if none does, all Muslims are considered sinful.
<i>Fard 'Ayn</i>	An individual obligation, i.e., an obligation that each individual must fulfill.
<i>Fatwā</i>	A religious verdict; plural: <i>fatāwā</i> or <i>fatāwī</i> .
<i>Fiqh</i>	The ability to understand and derive conclusions from the available evidence. It is often applied to the subject of "Islamic jurisprudence" that deals with the practical regulations in <i>Islām</i> .
<i>Fitnah</i>	Trial, test, temptation, or affliction.
<i>Ghayb</i>	The world beyond our senses or perception.
<i>Ghusl</i>	A ritual bath required after intercourse, ejaculation, or after a woman becomes clean from her menses.
<i>Ḥadīth</i>	Reports of the Prophet's sayings, actions, and approvals. We use <i>ḥadīth</i> (plural <i>ḥadīths</i>) to indicate individual report(s), and <i>Ḥadīth</i> with upper case H to indicate the subject of <i>Ḥadīth</i> specialty.
<i>Ḥajj</i>	Pilgrimage to Makkah.
<i>Ḥalāl</i>	Permissible.
<i>Ḥalqah</i>	A circle or ring. It normally refers to a study circle.

Term	Definition
<i>Ḥarām</i>	Prohibited.
<i>Ḥasan</i>	Good or acceptable. This is usually mentioned when indicating the degree of authenticity of some reports.
<i>Hijrah</i>	Migration. It usually refers to migration from Makkah to al-Madīnah.
<i>Ijmā'</i>	Consensus of the scholars.
<i>Ijtihād</i>	Exerting <i>juhd</i> (maximum possible effort) to reach the right conclusion based on the available evidence.
<i>Imām</i>	A leader or distinguished <i>Islāmic</i> scholar. It is often applied to the leader of prayer.
<i>Īmān</i>	Belief or conviction.
<i>Isnād</i>	Chain of narrators of a <i>ḥadīth</i> .
<i>Jāhiliyyah</i>	The era of extreme ignorance (<i>jahl</i>) and disbelief that preceded the advent of the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ).
<i>Jamā'ah</i>	A Muslim congregation or gathering. It is often applied to the congregational prayers. <i>Al-Jamā'ah</i> (the <i>Jamā'ah</i>) refers to the original community of the <i>ṣaḥābah</i> and their true followers through the ages.
<i>Janāzah</i>	A funeral or a deceased's prepared body.
<i>Jannah</i>	The gardens of paradise.
<i>Jihād</i>	Striving or fighting for Allāh's cause.
<i>Jinn</i>	An indivisible creation that Allāh created from fire and smoke, and to which belongs Satan. It is sometimes translated as "demons".
<i>Jumu'ah</i>	Friday. It also applies to the Friday prayer.
<i>Kāfir</i>	A person who practices <i>kufr</i> . Plural: " <i>kuffār</i> ".

Term	Definition
<i>Khalīfah</i>	Derives from <i>khalafa</i> , which means “succeeded” or “followed”. It commonly refers to a Muslim ruler who succeeded the Prophet (ﷺ) in leading the <i>Muslims</i> . Plural: <i>khulafāʾ</i> .
<i>Khamr</i>	Alcoholic beverages.
<i>Khilāfah</i>	Successorship. It usually refers to the period of rule of a <i>khalīfah</i> .
<i>Kufr</i>	Disbelief or rejection of faith.
<i>Khuṭbah</i>	Speech or sermon.
<i>Maghrib</i>	Sunset. It is usually applied to the fourth daily obligatory prayer, whose time extends from sunset until the red light disappears from the horizon.
<i>Makrūh</i>	An act that is disapproved in <i>Islām</i> .
<i>Maḥram</i>	A person who is closely related to another in such a way as to permanently prohibit them from marrying each other. This relationship results from blood, suckling, or marriage ties. A woman’s <i>maḥrams</i> are: her father, grandfather, son, grandson, brother, immediate uncle (from the mother’s or father’s side), father in law, son in law, foster son, foster brother, etc. Examples of non- <i>maḥrams</i> : cousins (from both sides), step brothers, brothers in law, etc.
<i>Masjid</i>	A place designated for <i>sujūd</i> . It usually refers to a mosque.
<i>Mathhab</i>	Way or approach. It usually refers to one of the four <i>Islāmic</i> schools of <i>fiqh</i> established by the Four <i>Imāms</i> : Abū Ḥanīfah an-Nuʿmān Bin Thābit, Mālik Bin Anas, Muḥammad Bin Idrīs ash-Shāfiʿī, and Aḥmad Bin Ḥanbal — May Allāh bestow His mercy on them all.

Term	Definition
<i>Muhājir</i>	A <i>ṣaḥābī</i> who made <i>Hijrah</i> from Makkah to al-Madīnah. Plural: <i>muhājirūn</i> or <i>muhājirīn</i> .
<i>Mujāhid</i>	A person who performs <i>jihād</i> . Plural: <i>mujāhidūn</i> or <i>mujāhidīn</i> .
<i>Munkar</i>	Disapproved; rejected.
<i>Muṣallā</i>	A place designated for <i>ṣalāh</i> . Most commonly, it applies to the grounds where the prayers of <i>ʿīd</i> and <i>janāzah</i> are performed.
<i>Mushrik</i>	See “ <i>shirk</i> ”.
<i>Nafl</i>	Extra, voluntary, or supererogatory deeds.
<i>Qadar</i>	Allāh’s decree and measure.
<i>Qiblah</i>	The direction of al-Kaʿbah in Makkah.
<i>Qudusī</i>	Holy. A <i>qudusī ḥadīth</i> is a <i>ḥadīth</i> that the Prophet (ﷺ) relates from his Lord (ﷻ).
<i>Rakʿah</i>	Means a full prayer unit, because it contains only one <i>rukūʿ</i> . Plural: <i>rakʿāt</i> .
<i>Ramaḍān</i>	The month of fasting. It is the ninth month of the <i>Islāmic</i> lunar calendar.
<i>Rukūʿ</i>	The act of bowing in the prayer. It derives from the verb <i>rakaʿa</i> which means “bowed down”.
<i>Ṣadaqah</i>	Charity.
<i>Ṣaḥābah</i>	The Prophet’s companions; singular: <i>ṣaḥābī</i> .
<i>Ṣaḥīḥ</i>	True or authentic.
<i>Salaf</i>	The early righteous pioneers and scholars of <i>Islām</i> —the <i>ṣaḥābah</i> and their true followers.
<i>Ṣalāh</i>	The prayer.

Term	Definition
<i>Salām</i>	Peace. It also means the greeting with peace (<i>as-salāmu 'alaykum</i>) among the Muslims.
<i>Sanad</i>	Same as <i>isnād</i> .
<i>Shahādah</i>	Testimony; it is mostly applied to the testimony of <i>Islām</i> : "There is no true deity but Allāh, and Muḥammad is Allāh's Messenger." Also, it is often applied to the most truthful form of physical testimony, which is martyrdom in Allāh's (ﷺ) cause.
<i>Shahīd</i>	A person martyred for Allāh's cause. Feminine: <i>Shahīdah</i> .
<i>Shar'</i>	It deriving from <i>sharā'a</i> , which means "legislated". It is usually used in reference to the <i>Islāmic</i> Law. <i>Sharī'ī</i> means a legislated or permissible matter in <i>Islām</i> .
<i>Sharī'ah</i>	Same as " <i>shar'</i> ".
<i>Shaykh</i>	Old man; learned man in <i>Islām</i> ; teacher; narrator.
<i>Shirk</i>	Polytheism, ascribing divinity to other than Allāh, or joining partners with Him in worship. A pagan or a person who practices <i>shirk</i> is a <i>mushrik</i> .
<i>Ṣiyām</i>	Fasting.
<i>Sujūd</i>	The act of prostration in the prayer.
<i>Sunnah</i>	Way, guidance, teachings, etc.
<i>Sūrah</i>	<i>Qur'ānic</i> chapter.
<i>Tābī'ī</i>	A student of the <i>ṣaḥābah</i> . Singular: <i>tābī'ūn</i> or <i>tābī'in</i> .
<i>Tafsīr</i>	<i>Qur'ānic</i> commentaries and interpretations.
<i>Takbīr</i>	Saying, " <i>Allāhu Akbar</i> — Allāh is the greatest."

Term	Definition
<i>Tahlīl</i>	Saying, " <i>Lā ilāha illallāh</i> — There is no true god except Allāh."
<i>Taqlīd</i>	Imitation — especially without knowledge.
<i>Taqwā</i>	Fearing Allāh and revering him.
<i>Tasbīḥ</i>	Saying, " <i>Subḥān Allāh</i> — Exalted is Allāh."
<i>Tashahhud</i>	Pronouncing the <i>Shahādah</i> . It is mostly applied to the part of the prayer where one sits, pronounces the <i>Shahādah</i> , invokes <i>ṣalāh</i> upon the Messenger, and supplicates.
<i>Taslīm</i>	Saying <i>salām</i> , especially to conclude the prayer.
<i>Thikr</i>	Remembering Allāh and mentioning Him.
<i>Ummah</i>	Community, nation, or followers.
<i>Wājib</i>	Obligatory or required.
<i>Witr</i>	Odd numbered. The night prayer as a whole is sometimes called <i>witr</i> because the total number of its <i>rak'āt</i> is odd.
<i>Wuḍū'</i>	Ablution for the prayer. It consists of rinsing the mouth, blowing the nose, washing the face, washing the forearms to the elbows, wiping over the head (including the ears), and washing the feet up to the ankles.
<i>Zakāh</i>	Obligatory charity.
<i>Zinā</i>	Adultery or fornication.
<i>Zuhr</i>	Noon. It is usually applied to the second daily obligatory prayer, whose time extends from the sun's crossing the zenith until the time when the shadows are as long as the objects.

Term	Definition
' <i>Abd</i>	Devoted servant and worshipper; plural: ' <i>ibād</i> .
' <i>Ālim</i>	A scholar or learned man; plural: ' <i>ulamā</i> '. ' <i>Allāmah</i> is an exaggerated form of ' <i>ālim</i> .
' <i>Aṣr</i>	After noon. It is usually applied to the third daily obligatory prayer, whose time extends from when the shadows are as long as the objects until sunset.
' <i>Ibād</i>	See "' <i>abd</i> '".
' <i>Īd</i>	A day of celebration in <i>Islām</i> . There are two annual ' <i>īds</i> (<i>al-fiṭr</i> and <i>al-Aḍḥā</i>) and one weekly ' <i>īd</i> (the day of <i>Jumu'ah</i>).
' <i>Ishā</i>	Night. It is usually applied to the fifth and last daily obligatory prayer, whose time extends from the disappearance of the red light from the horizon until the middle of the night (which is half way between sunset and dawn).
' <i>Ulamā</i>	See "' <i>ālim</i> '".

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